



FRIENDS OF MY LIFE AS AN INDIAN



J.W. SCHULTZ

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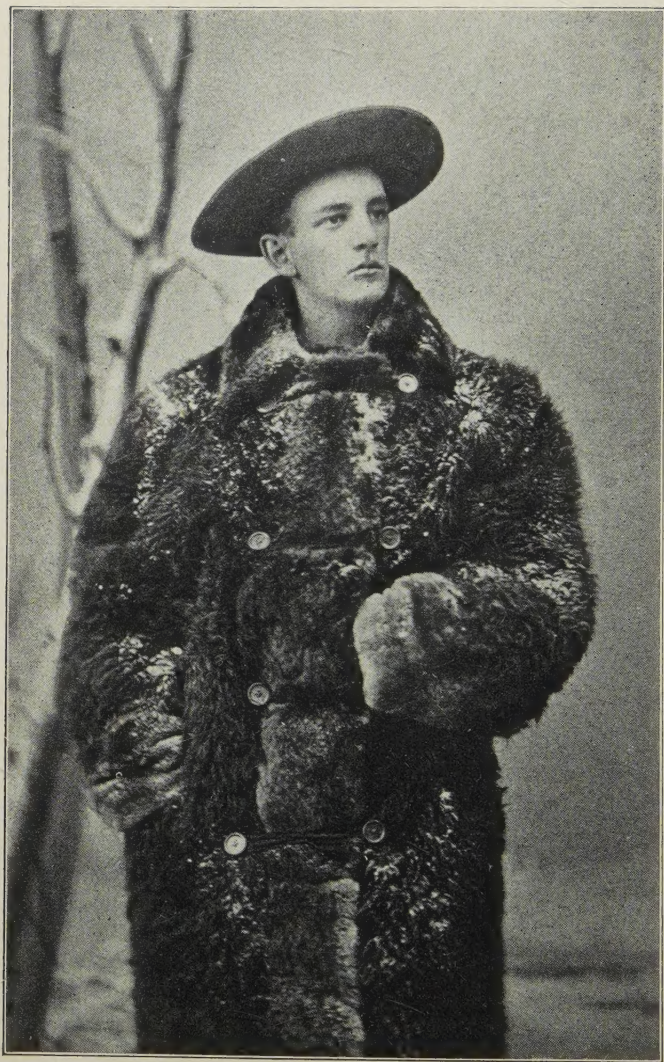


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FRIENDS OF MY LIFE AS AN INDIAN



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JAMES WILLARD SCHULTZ
(APIKUNI)
As a young man

FRIENDS OF MY LIFE AS AN INDIAN

BY
JAMES WILLARD SCHULTZ

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS



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FRIENDS OF MY LIFE AS AN INDIAN

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CHAPTER I

Reunion of Old Friends: The Buffalo Stone repels Thunder Bird's Attack, and Heavy Eyes tells of his Fight with a Real-Bear

"WE are old. Before we have to take the trail to the Sand Hills, let us once more camp together, and, as nearly as possible, live for a time as we did in the long ago. Say you where our camping-place shall be."

Such was the message that, early in this summer of 1922, I wrote young Crow Feathers to deliver to my old friends and relatives of the Pikuni, by official Washington misnamed the Blackfeet.

In due time came their answer: "It is good that we shall camp together once more. And where should our camping-place be but on Two Medicine Lodges River, our sacred stream? Up it, where plain and mountain forest meet, we will set our lodges in the beginning of Berries Ripe moon, and there await your coming. In Boy

Chief's lodge will be couches for you, and Lone Wolf, your son."

Journeying up from Los Angeles and delayed by the strike of the railway shopmen, I did not arrive at Glacier Park Station until August 5th. My son had already come on from New York, and rented, for a studio for the summer, a cottage just across the middle fork of the Two Medicine from the huge Glacier Park Hotel. Night had come. I neared the cottage, and in the yard in front of it saw six lodges redly glowing with the little fires within them. I thought of long-ago nights when I had seen six hundred Pikuni lodges, all of them of new white buffalo leather, so glowing. I thought of the sturdy care-free hunters who had lived in them: nearly all had long since gone to the Sand Hills. Of those who survived, only the few here had been able to travel and make camp and await my coming.

The outer lodge of this little camp was painted with a huge red half-circle rising several feet above the doorway; it was, I knew, the symbol of the Iniskim, the Buffalo Stone medicine, owned by Boy Chief. I neared the lodge, shouting out, "Nistumo! Ni kauto!" (Brother-in-law! I have come!)

Out came the old man, shouting to those in



GOING INTO CAMP BEFORE RISING BULL MOUNTAIN

the other lodges: "Ito', anukah kitai'okowow anan!" (Has come, he whom we await!) But they, too, had heard my call, and were hurrying out to welcome me — Heavy Eyes, Curly Bear, White Grass, Raven Chief, Many Tail Feathers, White Dog, Short Face, Wonderful Child, young Crow Feathers, and their women; and from the little cottage came my son and his good white wife, Naoma. It was a happy moment to us all. The soft smooth speech of these my Indian friends was pleasant in my ears. I was glad that I had not forgotten one least word of it.

"But come! Your place awaits you," Boy Chief presently said to me, and led the way into his lodge.

On the right of his couch at the back of the lodge, a couch of balsam boughs, with comfortable willow slat back-rests at each end, had been prepared for me. Between the two couches, suspended from a lodge pole, were the painted and fringed rawhide sacks containing his sacred medicine. An elk leather lining, painted with ancient geometrical figures, ran all around the interior of the lodge; and in spaces between the couches, and piled on each side of the doorway, were brightly painted parflèches, huge rawhide cases stuffed with the food supply and personal effects of the

little family. I could almost believe that we were in a lodge away back in the days of the buffalo. Our friends had also come in; we formed a complete circle around the little fire. Boy Chief filled his huge long-stemmed black stone pipe and passed it to Raven Chief — also a medicine man — to light. He laid a glowing coal upon the mixture of tobacco and *l'herbe*, blew a few whiffs of the sweet-scented smoke to the sky gods and down to Earth Mother, shortly prayed for long life and happiness for us all, and passed the pipe. As it went from one to another around the circle, I was asked about my journey up from the Always-Summer land; and White Grass wanted to know if it were really true, as he had heard, that there snow never fell, and fruits and vegetables ripened every moon of winter.

“When Cold-Maker comes down here from the north and covers the earth with snow and freezes over the lakes and streams, there in the south the trees are yellow with ripening fruit, and strawberries redden the gardens of the farmers,” I replied. And following the little exclamations of astonishment from the circle, one of the women wailed: “Would that we could live in that Always-Summer land instead of freezing here!”

“Cold-Maker is a coward; were he brave, there would be no winter here!” White Grass exclaimed.

"How so?" asked my son.

"Plain enough!" the old man replied. "When Sun goes south, Cold-Maker sneaks after him with his terrible winds and snow, and then, when Sun turns upon him, he will not fight, but runs back into his always-frozen north country, where Sun cannot follow. No, never does he get enough courage to stand and fight the great sky god!"

Suyo'pekina, Boy Chief's woman, was busy before the fire, and soon set before me a large broiled trout, a piece of bread, and a cup of Kootenai tea: "That is all that I can give you; we have no real-food," she said.

With the Pikuni, real-food — nitap'iwaksin — is meat, their staff of life. All other foods are kis'tapiwaksin — nothing, or useless foods.

Said my son: "You shall not want for real-food, for I have learned that there is a band of elk not far from us, up on the mountain-side."

"Good! Good! Go kill some of them for us!" old White Grass quavered.

I finished eating, and again the big pipe went the rounds of the circle.

As Curly Bear passed it to me, he said: "Well, Apikuni, we made camp here, only to await your coming. Where, now, would you like to have us set up our lodges?"

"Right at the foot of the first Two Medicine

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Lodges Lake. There where we can look out upon the beautiful water, and at Rising Wolf Mountain beyond it," I unhesitatingly answered.

"Ha! Where we camped, you and Blackfeet Man and I, when the real-bear crippled me!" Heavy Eyes exclaimed.

"Yes, right there," I replied; and all looked pityingly at his useless hand and disfigured face.

"We will move up there to-morrow," said Boy Chief.

"And on the day after that, I will go hunt the elk," said my son, and at that all of our friends smiled happily.

Said Raven Chief: "When you were last with us, Apikuni, we helped you write the story of Old Sun, greatest seizer of eagles who ever lived.¹ What now is in your mind? How can we help you?"

"This time I want to write about my friends; they who are living, and those who are gone. I want to make a thick-writing [book] about their life away back in the days before the fire-wagons came, and brought in the multitude of white-skins who killed off our buffaloes," I replied.

"Good! That will be a worth-while writing!" he exclaimed; and the others voiced their approval of it.

¹ *Seizer of Eagles*. Published April, 1922.

Said Heavy Eyes: "We go; our knowledge of the great country that once was ours dies with us. Only by reading Apikuni's writings may our children's children, and their children after them, learn how we lived, hunted, kept our enemies out of that country, what were our names for its mountains, lakes, and streams, and why we so named them."

"Our children! It is little that they want to know about those far-back days of the buffalo! White teachers and white preachers have ruined their minds! They have no faith in our gods nor any other! They lie, they steal! All that they care for is to wear good clothes and ride crazily about!" Boy Chief exclaimed; and to that there was sad assent.

"There are many, very many whites who are anxious to learn all that they can about our old-time life; it is for them that I will make this thick-writing," I said.

"I for one shall enjoy this work. Thinking and talking about our adventures in the long ago is the one bright part of my old age," said White Grass.

My son and Crow Feathers caught up a couple of horses and brought my roll of bedding and other baggage from the railway station. I spread the blankets upon my springy balsam couch.

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Our friends went to their lodges, and I lay down and was content. I watched the dying fire, listened to the hooting of owls in the pines on the flat, and the mournful howls of a far-off wolf, and soon slept.

The rumbling of distant thunder awoke me. It came nearer, booming here and there down the mountain-side, and lightning intermittently illuminated the lodge. Suyo'pekina cried out: "Have pity, Thunder Bird! Do not harm us!" Rain beat heavily upon the lodge, and fierce gusts of wind made its ears flap and snap with reports as loud as pistol shots. A flash of lightning almost blinded us, and, following it, a terrific, deafening crash of thunder broke right above us. Suyo'pekina shrieked and again begged Thunder Bird to spare us; and successive lightning flashes revealed Boy Chief sitting up and praying as he hurriedly filled his big pipe, lit it, and blew sacrificial smoke into his medicine sacks.

"O sacred and powerful Buffalo Stone, protect us, drive Thunder Bird away," he pleaded; and then sang one after another his medicine songs. And as suddenly as it had come, the storm passed on, up the ridge to the east, and out upon the plain, and we slept again.

Crow Feathers, early riser, awakened us: "You

within," he shouted, "come out and see what Thunder Bird did last night!"

We dressed and hurried out, and from the other lodges came our old people in answer to his call. No more than three feet from our doorway was a deep and jagged hole in the ground, as though a blast of giant powder had been exploded there. As we stared at it, White Dog gave a loud cry of astonishment and pointed to the lodge skin, and we saw that it had a black, burned streak running from the narrow space between the ears, down to the edge of the red painted half-circle, the symbol of Boy Chief's medicine.

Every one gasped, uttered little cries of reverence, and Boy Chief exclaimed: "O Buffalo Stone! O sacred one! You saved us, you saved us! Far more powerful you than Thunder Bird! He could not make his dreadful fire penetrate our lodge and kill us! When it struck the edge of your red painting, it had to glance off and uselessly tear into the ground!"

"True! True!" — "Yes! That medicine painting was your shield; it saved you!" the others cried.

After a moment of thought Boy Chief said to us: "Would that they who are always bothering me, the white men preachers who are always telling me that my medicine is bad, useless, would

that they could see this! It would close their mouths! Never again would they dare tell me that my Buffalo Stone medicine has no power for good, that, if I continue to pray to it, my shadow will be tortured by their fire-maker for all time to come!"

"Of mean white men, they are the meanest, the lowest! Always sneaking into our homes and trying to frighten our children and women; telling them that our gods are nothing-gods; that they must pray only to the whites' gods, or forever burn after they die!" said Many Tail Feathers.

"When they do that, why don't you put them out of your homes — if necessary, throw them out?" Lone Wolf impatiently asked.

"Yes! And then be arrested by our agent and shut in his iron-barred house for a moon or two! We are not free, like you and your father; we are slaves! We have to submit to anything that the Indian Service whites and the missionaries do to us!" said Curly Bear; and to that my son could make no answer.

In every lodge of our little camp, the breakfast talk was about the wonderful power of the Buffalo Stone, most ancient of all the medicines of the Pikuni. I say medicine, for that is the name that the early traders of the Hudson's Bay

Company and the American Fur Company gave to the paraphernalia of the various Sun priests, that they called medicine men. The Blackfeet name for the revered objects is Natosim (Sun's own); or, freely translated, belonging to Sun. For many years, with some of the best interpreters of the language of the Blackfeet tribes, I tried to learn the meaning of ninamp'skak, or medicine man, and, after all, it was my son who rightly translated it as, simply, coal chief: from nina (man, or chief), and ampskak' (coal, the red, live coal of fire). And we had suspected that the word meant lizard chief, nampski'uh being the name for that reptile.

This takes us back to a time when, in their far north country — the Great Slave Lake and thereabouts — the Blackfeet, like their brother tribes of Algonkian stock, were worshipers of light, or light personified. The supreme Cree deity was then, as now, Michi Wabun (Great Dawn), or, in other words, the white rabbit, and the Blackfeet god was Napi (Dawn Light), or, personified, Old Man. In that far-back time, fire was sacred, was worshiped, and was in charge of certain ones, ninamp'skaks (coal men), who kept it ever burning; who, when camp was moved, carried it in the form of slow-burning punk in clay-lined wooden receptacles, and in the new camping-

place at once built fires from which the people obtained live embers with which to start their own lodge fires.

Far more brave and adventurous than other branches of the great Algonkian stock, the time came when the Blackfeet tribes left their forests and swamps and came south out upon the plains, and, there meeting tribes who were sun-worshippers, themselves embraced the new faith with its spectacular rites and ceremonials, dear to the Indian heart. Naturally, their sacred coal chiefs, custodians of fire, became the priests of the Sun religion, and in the course of a century or more, they so widely improved its tenets and ceremonials that it became the greatest of all the religions of the buffalo-hunting tribes from the Saskatchewan River south to Mexico. In one thing only they made no change: the name for their sacred office, *ninamp'skak* (coal chief).

As soon as we finished our early meal, the women took down the lodges, the horses were brought in, and saddled and packed and harnessed to loaded travois, and we moved up the valley and made camp at the foot of the lower one of the Two Medicine Lakes, which is wholly within the Blackfeet Indian Reservation. The surveyed line separating the reservation and Glacier National Park runs from outstanding peak

to peak of the Rockies, from the Great Northern Railway north to the Canadian line, so that there remain in possession of the tribe wide forested slopes and valleys, home of deer and elk and bear, and high rocky projections of the mountains, inhabited by bighorns and goats. And so it was that my son could promise our old people some elk meat, for State game laws do not apply to Indian reservations, and he, of course, is a member of the Blackfeet tribe; and I am, too, though white of skin.

Our old women were setting up their lodges close to the graded road running up to the Great Northern Hotel Company's chalets on the second Two Medicine Lake, one of the most impressively beautiful places in the Park, and much frequented by tourists. Numbers of the sight-seers whizzed past us in big red automobiles, staring back at us as long as we were in sight. What a contrast that was, they of to-day, with their fine clothes, their luxurious city homes, and these my blanket-clothed people, with their simple lodges and open fire, bread and meat, berries and Kootenai tea practically their only food, and knives and axes their only necessary tools.

Said Curly Bear, sitting with me on the shore of the lake: "We never thought, Apikuni, that we should live to see the change that has swept

away forever our old-time life, the only life that was worth living; our buffaloes gone, a fire-wagon road running through our country, here great hotels filled with white people come to stare at our mountains and lakes and streams — yes, and to stare at and laugh at us.”

“Laugh at you?”

“Yes. You know that they do. Because we are not like them in color, dress, and way of life, they despise us, think that we are nothing-people, that we have no feelings. Worst of all is the way they stare at us, watch our every movement. They are without shame; they have no manners; why, they even come right into our lodges, pass right in front of our sacred medicines; sit down and joke about us and our belongings.”

“A few may do that; the real whites respect you. I know that they do,” I answered.

“Just you watch them,” he replied, and went to gather firewood for his lodge.

In the old days he would not have done that; it had been one of the women’s tasks.

Right here where our lodges were being set up, I had, in November, 1883, made my first camp on this lake, coming up from Fort Conrad with Sol Abbott, Henry Powell, Edward Tingle, and William Weaver for a supply of meat for the

winter. We had three wagons in the outfit, and were obliged to cut trail for them through the timber in order to bring them to the lake, the first wagons that ever rolled into the mountain valley. Game was very plentiful, and within a week we killed all the elk, deer, and bighorn that we could take out. That was a long time back: thirty-nine years! My four friends on the hunt had long since gone to the Sand Hills. And so had all the others who had camped with me here in later years — all, all of them excepting my son, and Heavy Eyes, here with us. And it was when we were camping in this very place, in September, 1889, that he had his lone and terrible encounter with the real-bear — nitap'-okaiyo (the grizzly), in which he was crippled for life.

Heavy Eyes, or, as he is known to the whites, Frank Monroe, is the one surviving son of Hugh Monroe, who was the first white man to traverse the eastern slope of the Rockies between the Saskatchewan and the Missouri Rivers, and of whom I shall give some account later on. In this first autumn month of 1889, Heavy Eyes, his nephew, Blackfeet Man (whose white name was William Jackson), and I, after long and strenuous work in our hayfields, decided that we must have a good hunt, and, leaving our women to

look after our ranches, we struck out for the mountains with team and wagon, camp equipment and saddle horses, and at noon of a warm still day arrived here at the foot of this lake.

"You two are enough to set up the lodge and get things in shape, and, while you are doing it, I will go up on the ridge and kill a deer," Heavy Eyes said to us.

"Yes. Go, and hurry back with meat: we need it," I replied.

Away he went upon his pinto hunting pony, across the outlet of the lake, and up the steep quaking-aspen ridge.

We had just finished putting up our lodge when we heard a shot, and then three more in quick succession, and later, several more. "That means meat; good, fat deer or elk meat," Siksikaiquan exclaimed.

"Yes, and he will soon be in with it. Let's start a fire and have a good bed of coals ready for broiling some ribs," I replied.

We gathered a lot of dry cottonwood branches, made a good fire of them, and watched for our hunter to return, and after a long time saw him riding down through the scattering quaking aspens to the river. He was swaying in the saddle, hanging on to the saddle horn with both hands, his hat was gone, and of his clothing but a few



FRANCIS MONROE, OR HEAVY EYES
Sole surviving son of Hugh Monroe, or Rising Wolf

shreds of his shirt remained. We ran to meet him, and, just as he came to the near shore of the river, he fell from his horse in a dead faint, the bloodiest, worst-torn man that we had ever seen, his face, right hand, right shoulder, and right leg terribly mangled. We brought water in our hats, bathed him, and he came to, murmured, "Nitsi kim'atsistutoki, nitap'okaiyo" (Did me wrong, real-bear), and fainted again.

We saw that his injuries were far too serious for us to attempt to heal, so Siksikaiquan ran to throw bedding into the wagon, and hitch up and take him to the agency, away down on Badger Creek, while I again bathed and then dressed his torn flesh and broken bones as best I could. He came out of his faint as we laid him on the bed in the wagon, and then away they went; and, loading my heavy Winchester, I crossed the river, climbed the ridge, and without trouble found the place of the bear fight. Below a wide, thick growth of service-berry brush the ground was trampled, torn, and splotched with black dried blood, and from there two bloody trails went west along the ridge. Following these, I came to a damp ravine, thickly grown with broad-leaved, brittle-stemmed bear weeds, and there found four distinct bear trails. I followed them on, soon losing the two that were not bloody, and later

losing these last when I passed out of the quaking aspens and into heavy pine and fir forest. And though I hunted three days for the wounded bears, I never found them. On the fourth day Siksikaiquan returned and told me that the wounded man had nearly died from loss of blood, but the Government physician reported him now in a fair way to recover, though he would be crippled for life.

It came to me now, as I sat there thinking of the old times, that I never had heard the victim tell of his encounter with the bears; so I went to camp to ask him to relate it. I found the old men sitting all in a row on the river-bank, passing the pipe, and Curly Bear called out to me: "Come. You are just in time to hear Heavy Eyes tell us about his fight here with the real-bears."

"For that very thing was I coming," I replied, and sat down with them and took a turn with the big pipe.

"Well, as I was saying," Heavy Eyes began, "we decided, we three, to come up here and have a good hunt. The night before we started, I had a powerful vision: I saw myself standing upon a big log in a heavy forest, standing there looking for game. Away to my right, some thick brush shook and swayed, and, watching, I saw two big real-bears come out of it and straight toward me.

As I was about to raise my rifle to aim at one of them, he called out to me: 'Stand as you are, for we have come to talk to you.' I was very much surprised to be so addressed, by a real-bear, in perfect Pikuni language.

"They came on and on toward me, and, when quite close, sat up on their haunches, and the one said to me: 'We heard you talking about going to Two Medicine Lake to hunt, you and two others. Well, go, kill all the grass-eaters that you want, but don't shoot at any of our relatives. I warn you now that you must not attempt to harm them. If you do, you will be sorry for it so long as you live!'

"Now, my friends, only that evening, just before going to bed, we had been talking about real-bears, saying that we hoped to find and make a big killing of them during our hunt. And these two had heard our talk; there could be no doubt of it! More surprised than ever, I tried to think quickly what I should say to them, and, before I could make up my mind, they suddenly disappeared, my shadow came back into my body. I awoke with a loud cry, and found myself sitting up in bed, my body wet with perspiration.

"Said my woman: 'Why that terrible yell? Are you sick?'

"'Not sick. I am all right,' I replied, and she

at once slept again. But I didn't. I lay awake the rest of the night, thinking constantly of my vision, and, when morning came, decided that I would heed that real-bear's warning. I told none, not even my woman, about my vision.

"We made so late a start that day that we were obliged to camp for the night on Willow Creek, and so did not arrive here until noon of the following day; and, as soon as we unhitched the team, I left Apikuni, here, and Siksikaiquan, to set up the lodge and make a good camp, and rode up on to the ridge, across there, to try to kill a deer.

"When I came to the game trails up there and found no fresh deer tracks in them, I was surprised. Then, following one of the old beaten paths, I saw that it was being used by bears, real-bears, and that accounted for the absence of the deer: they don't like, as you know, to rest and feed about where sticky-mouths are plentiful.¹

"I rode higher up on the ridge, and came to a steep rise on it where the service-berry brush was actually black with its heavy load of ripe fruit. I was very hungry, and got down off my horse to eat some of it, and, to prevent the animal leaving me, I made four or five turns of his bridle rope

¹ Pahk'sikwoyi (sticky-mouth), another name for the grizzly bear.

around my left arm. I moved from bush to bush, picking and eating the largest, blackest berries, and thought that I had never had any so sweet and juicy as they were. Suddenly, my horse snorted. I looked back at him, saw that he was staring at something on the ridge above me, and, looking that way, I saw a big real-bear standing up on his hind feet, clawing together top branches of the brush and stripping them of their fruit, leaves and all, with his big, sticky-lipped mouth. I thought at once about my vision, the warning that I had been given, but that bear was so fat that I wanted him; there was enough fat on his body to furnish cooking grease for my woman all winter. Within me there seemed to be two voices, one saying repeatedly, 'Don't shoot at him! Don't shoot at him!' And the other saying, 'Shoot! Kill him! You want all of that fat for your woman and children!'

"I surely felt that I should not shoot, but something stronger than my will made me raise my rifle and fire at the bear. I heard the bullet spat into him. He gave a terrible roar of pain, and at that three more bears rose up close by him, and stared about, trying to learn what had hurt him. He had gone down out of my sight in the brush, and, thinking that I had killed him, I fired at one of the others, and he roared like a

mad bull and came for me. I fired at him again and again, knew that my bullets struck him, but he kept coming. He sprang upon me, bit me, and we fought one another down the steep ridge, my horse following, for his bridle rope was still wrapped around my left arm. I was hurt very badly, bleeding plenty, and so was the bear. I knew that I had only two more cartridges in the magazine of my rifle, but I fired them as I got the chance, which only made the bear roar with pain and come at me again. He sprang upon me and began mauling me, and I saw my horse fighting him, kicking him fiercely, and became unconscious. When I came to life, I saw that I was under my horse, who was still kicking the bear, and I knew that I was again going to faint. I wanted to cry out for help; my voice was going: 'Pinto horse,' I whispered, 'fight hard for me,' and I knew no more.

"Again I came to life, to life and terrible pain. Blood was running from my face, from my torn and mangled shoulder and breast, from my crushed hand. My horse was standing close by me, his haunches torn and bleeding. I called upon him again for help, and he stood quietly while I crawled to him, and after many failures at last I got up into the saddle with my rifle. Why I hung on to it, useless as it now was, I don't

know. I was too weak to guide the horse, so I told him to take me to camp, and he did his best to take me straight there. Just as we crossed the river, I fainted again, but then Apikuni and my nephew were running to help me. They brought me to life, washed and dressed my wounds, my nephew hurried me down to the agency, and that white doctor set my broken bones.

“There, my friends! That is what I got — crippled for life for not obeying the warning of my vision!”

CHAPTER II

*We learn how Thunder Bird brought Trouble to the Peoples
of the Earth*

IN the late afternoon, Lone Wolf and Naoma came up to camp with us overnight, to make an early start next day for the elk up on the mountain-side. Our old women, sitting together just outside Boy Chief's lodge, admired her trim shooting-clothes, corduroy knickers, leather puttees and stout shoes, gray flannel shirt and broad-brimmed hat, her light but powerful bolt-action rifle.

One of them exclaimed: "Kyaiyo! More privileged she than ever we were! Imagine what our men would have said had we told them that we were going to carry rifles and hunt with them, and kill meat for our lodges!"

"I know what my man would have said!" White Dog's woman exclaimed. "He would have said, 'Woman, have you gone crazy? Attend wholly to your lodge work, and I will provide the meat!'"

"And what wouldn't they have done to us had we dressed ourselves in their wide-flapped leggings and open-neck shirts!" said Suyopekina.

"Watching these whites who come to the big hotel back there, I have pitied the men," said another. "Not they, but their women wear good clothes, beautiful clothes, and make the men run about, pick up the things that they drop, help them up into the red fire-wagons that run up and down this road; make real slaves of them!"

"Yes! As though they hadn't strength to open a door or climb a step or two! They just pretend that they are weak!"

"If our men slaved that way for us, how ashamed of them we should be!" said Suyo'-pekina, and all nodded assent to that.

We had trout for our evening meal, big cut-throat trout that I had caught in the outlet of the lake, and, later on, our old friends came one by one to sit with us around our little lodge fire, and talk of days long past. Watching Boy Chief, cutting tobacco with an ancient, wood-handled flint knife that belonged to his medicine outfit, none spoke for a time. Then, as the big pipe was filled and lit and started the round of our little circle, White Grass asked me if I knew the story of the making of the first flint weapons. I answered that I had never heard it, but was not surprised that I did not know it. There had been a time when, after twenty-seven straight years of living with these people, I had believed that I knew all

their tales and traditions; but subsequent visits with them had proved that I was wrong; on every fresh visit I was hearing many of them new to me. I asked for this one, and White Grass signed to another to tell it.

“You have seen, Apikuni, here and there upon the plain and in the river valleys, large circles of heavy stones, some of the circles as many as ten long steps across. It was in the time of our ancients who made those circles that flint knives and flint arrow-points were first made,” Curly Bear began.

“Having no knives, and therefore no wooden pegs with which to fasten their lodge skins to the ground, they weighted them with heavy stones to prevent the wind blowing them over. And three or four families, related to one another, occupied each lodge; hence the great size of them. The lodge skin was composed of eight or ten separate strips that could be easily fastened one to another, and each strip was carried by one of the occupants of the lodge when camp was moved: and, similarly, the very long and heavy lodge poles were apportioned, one to a grown person of good strength, or one to four or five children to drag. The dogs of those ancients drew small travois, upon which were loaded the lighter articles of the camp. It was not until

horses were obtained, and made to carry heavy burdens and drag poles, that each family was enabled to live by itself in a lodge wholly its own.

"In that far-back time, our ancestors were divided into two camps. A man named Rain Cloud was chief of one of them, and of the other, one named Red Cloud was chief. Although buffaloes and other food animals were very plentiful, both camps went hungry the most of the time, for the men had no weapons with which to kill them. When the hunters did manage to trap or knock upon the head a few animals, they skinned and cut them up with pieces of sharp-edged rocks that they found here and there.

"Then, one night, Rain Cloud had a vision, in which his sacred helper appeared to him and told him to do certain things. Accordingly, the next morning he went out and searched for and found a small piece of flint stone, and carried it home. He then told his family, and all the other occupants of the lodge, to go out and not return until he shouted to them that they could enter. As they left, they heard him sing a song, a strange, deep-toned, and slow song that they had never heard before, and wondered where he had learned it; up to this time he had told them nothing about his vision, nor why he had ordered them to leave the lodge.

“Following now the instructions of his sacred, secret helper, Rain Cloud put the piece of flint into the fire, where it soon split into small slivers of the rock. Taking one of these, and working it with a slender stick that he had pointed by rubbing it upon a rough rock, he made of the flint a very good one-edged knife. He then shouted to his people that they could return. When they came into the lodge, he showed them what he had done during their absence, even cut meat with the knife to show them how sharp it was. They asked him how he had made it, and he replied that his sacred helper had forbidden him to reveal to any one the art of knife-making, but if they would find and bring to him large pieces of flint, he would make a knife for every lodge of the big camp.

“Now, when plenty of large flints had been found and brought to Rain Cloud’s lodge, he feared that, if he worked them into knives there, inquisitive ones of his camp, or of Red Cloud’s camp, would disobey his order and peek in and see how he made them. He was a very kind man, and would have been glad to teach the people how to make knives for themselves, but he dared not do it, for in his vision his sacred helper had said to him: ‘Now that I have taught you this art, you must keep your knowledge of it to yourself.’

I warn you that, should others learn it, great trouble will come upon your people and all other peoples, trouble that will last for all time to come.'

"Determined to obey this order, Rain Cloud went wandering about to find a place where he could make the knives in secret, and decided upon a small prairie surrounded by bare hills. Should people come to the tops of the hills to spy upon him, he would be so far from them that they could not see what he was doing, and, should they start toward him, he could cease work and drive them away. So there, to the center of the little flat, he daily carried a piece of flint, built a fire, split the flint, and worked it into one or more knives, which he gave to his people, one to one lodge of them, as fast as he could make the sharp cutters.

"Came now some people from Red Cloud's camp, to visit friends in Rain Cloud's camp, and, returning home, they told their chief about the sharp flint knives that Rain Cloud was making, secretly making for his children, a knife for each lodge of them.

"'You all shall also have them, and soon,' Red Cloud declared. He went straight to Rain Cloud, and asked to be shown how to make the sharp cutters.

"'That I cannot do for you, chief though you

are; my sacred helper commanded me to teach no one how to make them; warned me that, if others did learn the secret, trouble would come upon all the peoples of the earth,' Rain Cloud replied.

"Red Cloud laughed. 'Surely you misunderstood your vision; knowledge of this knife-making art could not possibly harm people; it would be of great value to them, enable them to do quickly work that now requires long time and much strength. Come, be friendly, tell me; show me how to make a sharp, flint cutter,' he pleaded.

"Not only pleaded, but offered to pay, to give all that he had, for being taught how to make the knives. And then, when Rain Cloud still refused him, he got very angry, declared that he would surely learn how to make flint knives, and went home, sat long in his lodge, planning how to do it. On the following day, he went close to Rain Cloud's camp, then turned and went to the top of a hill from which he could look down upon the little flat where the chief was making the knives. He could see him, sitting there beside his fire, bending over his work, rapidly moving his arms, his right arm, particularly, as though repeatedly pushing or striking his piece of flint. He turned back down the hill

and went home, singing happily all the way, making up a little song in which were the words: 'Rain Cloud, I shall soon learn your secret.'

"That night, as soon as the moon came up, Red Cloud went to the little flat where Rain Cloud worked, and, near the fireplace, securely hid himself in a thick patch of rosebrush. Morning came, and with it Rain Cloud hurrying down to his working-place to make more knives. Straight he came to his fireplace, never going about in the brush to see if any one might be hidden there, watching only the surrounding hill slopes for any who might be coming to try to learn his secret art. He started a fire with burning punk that he had brought from his lodge, and, when it was blazing well, put into it a piece of flint. It soon split up, and, as soon as the fragments cooled, he took one of them and began working it into knife shape, and not a move that he made escaped Red Cloud's watching eyes. Two knives he made, and, when Sun was straight up in the middle, he took them up, and his slender, pointed-stick tools, and went home. But Red Cloud never moved, lay there in the brush all day, and, when night came, he took from the fireplace some pieces of flint, and hurried off through the darkness to his camp beyond the hills.

“‘Where have you been?’ his woman asked.

“‘Just wandering around, resting in the brush,’ he answered.

“‘You could be doing better than that; if you really cared for your children and me, you would be trying to get meat for us, instead of lying around in the brush,’ she scolded. He did not get angry at her; he laughed happily and said: ‘Woman, my lying in the brush was the best thing for you — yes, and for all our people — that I ever did: I there made a great discovery!’

“‘Of what? Quick! Tell me!’

“‘But he would not do that; he only laughed, and hummed to himself the little song that he had made up, and lay down and slept.

“‘On the following morning, Red Cloud went out alone from his camp, and, selecting hard-wood sticks of certain sizes, made flint working instruments just like those that he had seen Rain Cloud use on the previous day. He also sought for and found some large pieces of flint, and took them home with his wooden implements. He had done a hard day’s work and was very tired. He entered his lodge and went straight to his couch and lay down. His woman, seeing that, instead of meat, he had brought in only a few sticks and stones, scolded him again for neglecting her and their hungry children; and again he

made no reply to her fire-words, merely hummed to himself the little song that he had made up. But now there were more words in it; they were: 'Rain Cloud, I have learned your secret!'

"Came another morning, and Red Cloud built a fire out in front of his lodge, and shouted to all the men of his camp to gather there. They came, and could hardly believe that they heard rightly when he told them that they were to see him make a flint knife; some of them laughed, and whispered to one another that they believed their chief had gone crazy.

"But they didn't laugh a little later, when, having split up the big pieces of flint, they watched him flake an edge of one of them, with short, hard blows of his prizing sticks, more and more carefully and gently toward the last, until it had a straight, thin, and sharp cutting edge. 'There! You have seen how it is done, go make knives for yourselves,' he told them. Some of the crowd never heard him: they were already hurrying away to find pieces of flint and make wooden instruments like those he had used. Within a moon from that day, every lodge of the big camp had plenty of knives; even the children were carrying them, and helping skin and cut the meat of the few animals that their elders managed to trap or in some way kill.

"In Rain Cloud's camp it soon became known that Red Cloud had taught his people to make flint knives, and, hurrying to their chief, the people of this camp asked that he no longer keep to himself his secret art; and so insistent were they that he was obliged to teach them how to make the knives. But he was very angry, and, going over to Red Cloud's camp, demanded to be told how he had learned the art.

"I had no trouble in learning it. I hid in the brush, there where you were making the knives, and saw how you did it,' the other replied.

"And should have kept your knowledge of it to yourself. You have taught your people to make the knives, and have obliged me to teach my people the art. I tell you, now, that you have done wrong, and will do still worse: you are to bring great trouble to the peoples of the earth!"

"How so? How can people's making of knives cause trouble?"

"You will see,' the other replied, and, wrapping his robe about him, without another word of explanation he went home.

"It was a moon later that, wandering about in search of pieces of flint, Red Cloud was surprised by a plover that, running close up to him, said: 'I have been sent to help you. I live in the clouds, and Thunder Bird is my chief. He sends

me to teach you to make good knives of flint, instead of the very poor ones that you and your people are making now.'

"'Your chief and you are very kind. Teach me; I shall be glad to know how to make better knives,' Red Cloud replied. And right there, Plover had him build a fire, split a flint, and make, by following his instructions, a large knife with two edges instead of the single-edged ones that he had been making. It was a great improvement, as the knife would last twice as long as the former kind, and Red Cloud was very grateful. He begged Plover to remain with him, and, upon his promise people should not harm him, the bird agreed to remain for a time.

"So it was that, some time later, and after a visit with Thunder Bird, his chief, Plover returned to earth and told Red Cloud that the great sky god had ordered that he be taught to make a really powerful weapon, one that would be of great use to him and his people. And, following the bird's instructions, he made a bow of service-berry wood, and, while it was drying, made several arrows of slender and straight cuttings of willows, sharpening the fore ends, and to the other, the notched ends, attaching feathers. When both bow and arrows were dry, he began shooting, and was soon able to kill grouse

and rabbits, but when he shot deer and antelope, they ran away with the arrows sticking in their bodies. He complained to Plover that the arrows were not powerful enough. He went to Thunder Bird about it, and, returning, brought further instructions from the powerful sky god. Closely following them, he split the ends of the arrows, inserted the base ends of small, double-edged knives in the cleavages, bound them tightly with sinew thread and glue, and then went hunting, and with a single arrow shot a big buffalo cow. She ran but a little way and fell and died. At that, all of his people set up a great shouting of joy and ran to the kill. They embraced him and called him a great chief, for they had seen at once that, by making and using bow and knife-tipped arrows, they could kill all the buffaloes and other animals that they could use. In a very short time after that, their great camp was red with drying meat, and everywhere in it women were tanning buffalo robes for bedding, and soft leather of smaller animals for clothing."

"Now, when Rain Cloud heard about the weapons that were being made and used by the people of the other camp, he hurried over there, and on his way across the hills saw a hunter sneak close to a buffalo, and kill it with bow and arrows. He went on into the camp, sought out

Red Cloud, and said to him: 'By making bows and arrows, teaching your hunters to make them, you have done a great wrong. I ask you now, right now, to destroy all that have been made, and then forbid your men making any more of them.'

" 'You must be crazy, or you would not ask me to do that. What? Destroy our bows and arrows, cease making them, the most useful things that we have, weapons that enable us to kill all the animals that we need? No, never, never will we do that!' Red Cloud replied.

" 'Who taught you to make the weapons?' asked Rain Cloud.

" 'Plover taught me, but it was by Thunder Bird's orders that he came down from the sky to teach me how to make them. He is very generous, that great sky god. Just look about, see the result of his kindness: our camp red with meat, our women tanning all the robes and skins that we can use.'

" 'I am not blind; I see that plainly. I see, too, Thunder Bird's intention in teaching you to make the weapons, and that is, that knowledge of the art of bow-and-arrow-making shall spread to all the peoples of the earth, so that they shall soon be fighting one tribe against another, killing one another. Yes, my friend, that is Thunder Bird's

intention. He wants to spread death and suffering to all peoples. And you can prevent that. Now, before it is too late, make your men bring to you, to destroy, the bows and arrows that they have made, and do you break and burn them and forbid more being made. Do that, my friend, and so long as there are peoples on this earth they will praise your name.'

"Red Cloud laughed. 'What? Deprive my people of these things that enable them to obtain all the fat meat and hides and skins that they can use? Never will I do that,' he again answered.

"Rain Cloud turned and went sadly back to his camp, and there told his people that they must not make bows and arrows. They made no reply to that, but began to leave him, family after family going over to Red Cloud's camp, there to make the weapons and hunt with them. So it was that he had to take back his order about the weapons, but he told his people that they would live to see the time when men would be killing one another with them, and he was right. Yes, by his gift to Red Cloud, Thunder Bird succeeded in bringing great trouble upon the peoples of the earth. They had up to this time, lived in peace with one another, perhaps because they had to work so hard to obtain meat, and skins for clothing. But now, with these new and powerful

weapons, they easily and quickly killed all the animals that they wanted. They became greedy; tribe quarreled with tribe about the possession of some rich hunting ground, and men killed one another. And from far up in the blue, Thunder Bird looked down upon them as they fell and died, and his mean heart was glad."

So ended the tale. It was late; our old people were becoming sleepy, and Boy Chief advised them to go to their lodges.

"Yes, we will do so, but first we must do something for the success of Lone Wolf, when he goes to-morrow to hunt the elk. Now, friends, all together, the Wolf Song," said White Grass.

They sang it with a will, and four times, the shrill, fierce song of the wolf, keenest and most successful of all the beasts that prey. And when they had finished and were preparing to leave us, White Grass exclaimed, "There! We have helped you! I know that you are going to kill some fat meat for us!"

CHAPTER III

*We look upon Rising Wolf's Monument, and have Talk about him
First White Man to traverse this Mountain Country*

DAY had not quite come when Lone Wolf and Nahoma left our lodge in quest of the elk, and I heard old White Grass, in the lodge nearest us, earnestly praying Sun to give them complete success, and then singing again, and four times, the Wolf Song. In all the lodges women began to chatter as they built the morning fires, washed, combed, and rebraided their hair, and began preparing the morning meal. We men went to the river and had a quick bath in the cold water, and, after breakfasting, gathered at the shore of the lake to smoke and talk. From far up on the mountain-side there came to us the dull booming of guns, two shots, and then two more, and the old men looked at one another, clapped hands together, and laughed happily.

"There! Meat and plenty of it! I knew that our prayers and the Wolf Song would give our hunters success!" said White Grass.

An hour or so later, we saw them coming, walking fast across the flat, and as they neared us saw, too, that their hands were bloody. Trembling,



LONE WOLF AND APIKUNI (JAMES WILLARD SCHULTZ)



APIKUNI (JAMES WILLARD SCHULTZ), CURLY BEAR,
LONE WOLF, AND MANY TAIL FEATHERS

his voice quavering in his excitement, the old man asked them how many elk they had killed.

"Two bulls, both fat," my son silently signed, and then there was much clapping of hands as the old men congratulated him.

"But you mistake: give my woman here the praise; she killed them, not I!" Lone Wolf replied.

They, and their women who had hurried out to us, could hardly believe that they heard aright.

"What? Two bulls, and killed by your young woman? It doesn't seem possible that she could have done it!" cried White Dog.

"But she did. Dropped one with her first shot, wounded another, and with two more shots killed it as it was running off," Lone Wolf replied.

Their astonishment was boundless. "It is the strangest thing I ever heard of! To think that she could have done that, she only a woman, just as you and I!" said White Dog's woman to Suyo'pekina.

"Yes. Never has one of our kind hunted, and killed, none except our virgin warrior Running Eagle, who hunted and killed, right here in these mountains in the long-ago," the other answered.

When our excited little group quieted down, my son said that he wanted horses with which to

pack in the meat. As young Crow Feathers ran to bring in the band, White Grass declared that he was going out to the kills, to see once more elk lying right where the hunter had dropped them.

"But you must not do it, you with so many and constant aches and pains," his woman objected.

"Woman, though I die for it, I am going up there and help skin those elk and cut up the meat!" he declared.

He was unable to mount the horse when, a little later, it was led to him, and my son and I lifted him up into the saddle. He rode away with the others, crooning a song of contentment.

We turned in our seats on the shore and again faced the lake. Boy Chief refilled his big pipe. Curly Bear lit it and blew ceremonial whiffs of the smoke to the Above People, and to 'Earth Mother. It came from hand to hand along the row of us. None spoke for a long time: we were watching the trout breaking the mirror-like surface of the lake in their quest of food, and a shrill-crying loon swimming slowly about, and diving after them.

Said Heavy Eyes, finally, as he pointed to the huge, red-and-gray rock mountain towering high above the others rimming the upper end of the

valley, "Apikuni, younger brother, it was a fine and generous thing that you did, when you named that great mountain after my father."

"None had so good right to it for his monument as your father, Rising Wolf," I replied. I added, after a moment of thought: "It is possible that some of the members of the first party of whites who passed through this country saw it, but I believe that he actually was the first white man who saw it; anyhow, saw it in its entirety from its base to summit high in the blue." I referred, of course, to the members of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, who, on the way back from the Pacific, in 1806, turned north from the Missouri, crossed the Teton River — as they named it, Tansey River — and, at the junction of Two Medicine and Cutbank Rivers, killed two Gros Ventre Indians.

Said Curly Bear: "Yes, though white of skin, Rising Wolf was one of us, and therefore it is right that this great mountain should bear his name. But those other mountains back of it, and north of it, the most of them are named after white men who never were even our friends, whom we have never even seen! That is wrong! They were our mountains; in a way they are still ours; and they should bear the names of our great ones who have gone to the Sand Hills; for in-

stance, Lone Walker, Bull-Turns-Around, Big Lake, Three Suns, Black Eagle —”

“Yes, every one of those mountains, and every lake and stream within them, should be named after the great ones of the Pikuni, but it can’t be done. I have tried hard to have it done, and have failed. Certain men in Great Father’s town, who have charge of such matters, have denied my request,” I said.

“Ha! White men! They are thieves, all of them!” Raven Chief bitterly exclaimed.

“No, not all; many tens of hundreds of them would be glad to have these places named after our dead and gone Pikuni chiefs, but they are powerless; their wishes are nothing to those few powerful givers-of-names in the Great Father’s town,” I replied.

Following that, Boy Chief knocked the ashes from the smoked-out pipe, and again we became silent, each busy with his own thoughts.

My own thought was that I was very fortunate in having intimately known Rising Wolf — Hugh Monroe — and that I should have set down, during the long time that we were together, every incident of his long life upon these Northwest plains, instead of merely the high spots in his career. I liked best his often-repeated tale of his first year with the Pikuni, which I have told as

well as I could in "Rising Wolf, the White Black-foot," which my publishers put into book form in 1921.

Briefly, Hugh Monroe, son of Captain Hugh Monroe, of the English Army, and Amélie de la Roche, daughter of a noble family of French *émigrés*, was born in Three Rivers, Province of Quebec, in 1798, and, when but sixteen years of age, prevailed upon his father and mother to allow him to enter the service of the Hudson's Bay Company. Leaving Montreal with a west-bound flotilla of the Company's boats, in the spring of 1814, he arrived at Mountain Fort—Bow Fort—on Bow River and close to the foot of the Rockies, in the following summer. There the post factor at once detailed him to live and travel with the Pikuni tribe of the Blackfeet Confederacy, in order thoroughly to master their language and become post interpreter. So it was that, under the protection of the head chief, Lone Walker, he went south with the tribe, south along the foot of the Rockies to the Yellowstone, wintered there, and in the spring returned to the fort: and was again sent out with the tribe for another year upon the plains. At the end of that time, he could speak Blackfeet as well as he could French and English, and for some years was interpreter at the post. And so,

without doubt, Rising Wolf was the first white man to traverse the eastern foot of the Rockies between the Saskatchewan and the Missouri, and the first of his race to camp and hunt in the mountains and stream valleys between the Missouri and the Yellowstone, particularly the Upper Judith River, Lower Musselshell River, and the Judith, Belt, Moccasin, and Snowy Mountains.

During his second year of wandering with the Pikuni, Rising Wolf, to use the Blackfeet of it, *otsit'okemi*: that is, he "womaned," and he took for his woman no other than the young and beautiful daughter of Lone Walker, the powerful chief of the tribe. By her he had two sons, John and Frank, and three daughters, Mary, Lizzie, and Amélie. Of these but two are now living, Frank, or Heavy Eyes, and Amélie, at present an invalid in the hospital at the Blackfeet Agency.

For a number of years before his death, Rising Wolf lived some of the time with his son Piskan (Buffalo Corral), or John Monroe, on the Two Medicine River, near the Holy Family Mission, and the rest of the time with his grandson Siksikai'kwam (Blackfeet Man), or William Jackson, on Cutbank River. I spent much time with him at both places, but mainly at the home of Jackson, with whom I was closely associated

in many ways. But long before that, when my closest friend of all, Joseph Kipp, and I had Fort Conrad, a trading post on the Marias River, where the Great Falls and Canada Railway now crosses the stream, Rising Wolf came to visit us for weeks at a time, and it was there that I became intimately acquainted with him. He came there more to visit Kipp's mother, Earth Woman, a Mandan, and her companion, Crow Woman, a Minnetaree, than he did us, but at every opportunity I sat in and listened to the talk of the three, which was always in Pikuni (Blackfeet), a language in which we were all of us proficient, and with them went back into a time antedating the first trek of emigrants out upon the plains to the west of the Mississippi.

At the lower end of the Fort Conrad bottom, where the Dry Fork puts into the Marias, in the summer-time the old women had a little garden of Mandan corn and squash, a shelter of poles, and an old lodge skin; and there on many an afternoon, I sat with them and Rising Wolf. First, we moistened the growing plants with buckets of water that we carried up the steep bank. The dwarf corn was no more than two feet high when the ears ripened, and the squash was from four to six inches in diameter. And then, when our work was done, we built a little fire and had

a feast, and finally, Rising Wolf and I prepared our smokes and the story-telling began. We each had a long-stemmed, black stone pipe. The old man filled his pipe with a mixture of red willow bark and tobacco, but I preferred the Blackfeet mixture, tobacco and *l'herbe*; the red willow bark, or kinnikinnick, was used by the Crees, Assiniboines, and Sioux, but was not liked by the Pikuni.

So it was that, there at the mouth of the Dry Fork of the Marias, on many a summer afternoon, I heard many a tale of the Upper Missouri and the Saskatchewan country, some of them of tribal history and personal experiences, antedating the establishing of trading posts of the American Fur Company on the Upper Missouri. All three of my old friends had known Sacajawea, the heroine of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Captain James Kipp, a factor of the American Fur Company, had taken Earth Woman for his mate prior to the building of the Company's Fort Union at the mouth of the Yellowstone, in 1830, and she had accompanied him and his *engagés* to the mouth of the Marias River, in the summer of 1831, when he built there Fort Mackenzie. Both she and Crow Woman had known and known well, the three great factors of the Company: Kenneth Mac-

kenzie, builder of Fort Union; Alexander Culbertson, builder of Fort Lewis and Fort Benton; and James Dawson, last ruler of the vast territory tributary to Fort Benton, and with whose going the great Company wound up its affairs and retired from business. They had shaken hands with George Catlin, when, in 1832, he came to Fort Union to paint his remarkable pictures of Indians gathered there for the spring trade, and they had met an even greater "chief," as they called him, Maximilian, Prince of Wied. In "Bird Woman," and in "Rising Wolf, the White Blackfoot," I have told, as well as I could, some of the tales that these old people told me, in our little garden shelter by the river. But, oh, what a lot I heard there that I deemed unimportant, and have forgotten, valuable history of those far-back days of the fur trade, as I now know!

"Heavy Eyes," said I, as I passed the pipe to Curly Bear, "camping as Rising Wolf often did in these mountains, just he and you, his children, it seems strange that you were not all wiped out by some passing war party of the enemy, Sioux, Assiniboine, or Crow. Why, even the Minnetaree war parties knew this part of the country."

"We did have some fights with them, some

narrow escapes," he replied. "But you must remember that my father was iksatosim.¹ Soon after he took my mother for his woman. Before any of us children were born, he one night had a powerful vision. A wolf came to him and said, 'I am chief of these great plains, and I have taken a liking to you; therefore I am going to tell you how to make something that will preserve you in times of danger. Go and get the tail feathers of an owl, skins of weasels and minks, and make a war bonnet.'

"'As you say,' my father, or, rather, his shadow answered. He collected the feathers and skins and made the bonnet, but it did not please the wolf; he took it apart, rearranged the materials, singing all the time as he put them together. And when he was satisfied with his work, he put the bonnet on my father and walked around and around him, looking at it, still singing, and at last said, 'There, it is as I wanted it. This will preserve you from the enemy, you, and any friend or relative to whom you may lend it. And do not forget this, my song that goes with it, and which you are to sing when you put the bonnet on and face the danger. However, your possession of the bonnet, just your having it near you, in your lodge, on your person or your horse when

¹ Of the Sun. Or, crudely, great medicine.

traveling, will itself protect you from the enemy. There! I have helped you, I go.'

"My father's shadow came back into his body. He awoke and thought about his wonderful vision, awoke my mother and told her about it and she was glad. 'Oh, my man! Sun is kind! He has pitied you; he has caused his child, Chief Wolf, to give you the one thing that you needed to become a warrior of our tribe. Make the bonnet at once, so that I may no longer fear for your safety when you go out to hunt and trap,' she said.

"My father made the bonnet, just as his vision had directed, and kept singing the song over and over until he knew that he could never forget it. He carried that bonnet in a painted and fringed rawhide cylinder that he made, and, as Chief Wolf had predicted, it helped him safely through many a place where his life was in danger. Time and time again he lent it to my grandfather, Lone Walker, and Three Suns, my uncle, and they wore it on raids against the enemy, and with great success. In his old age he gave it to Three Suns. It is now in Three Suns' grave, down below here on the Two Medicine."

"I well remember that bonnet; it was a powerful protector," said old White Grass.

"Your father, Rising Wolf, was born in the

faith of the Black Robes. He believed it true, and yet he also had strong faith in the religion of the Pikuni," I remarked.

"Yes. And why shouldn't he have had it? Why shouldn't he have had faith in Sun? There he is, in plain sight crossing the blue every day, giving us of his heat, making the grass and all things to grow. We know that he lives, and from our far-back ancestor, Scar Face, who visited him in his far-off island home, we learned what to do, how to live the kind of life that pleases him. Yes, my father had real faith in his power, in his goodness to us, his children, and less and less faith in the religion of the Black Robes, until, at the last, he altogether turned from it."

"Neither does Apikuni, here, believe the religion of the whites. Is it not so, brother-in-law?" Boy Chief said to me.

"At the medicine lodges we have had, you have seen me partake of the sacred tongue," I answered.

"Yes! True! True! He is of our faith! He came to us, a mere boy, he grew up with us, became a true believer in our Sun religion!" old White Grass exclaimed. And to that the little circle murmured acquiescence.

I said nothing. I have no belief in anything beyond this life. But I have to confess that par-

icipation in the religious rites and ceremonies of the Pikuni has more than once brought tears to my eyes. No white preachers that I ever heard, and I have sat before some famous ones, ever offered prayers so affecting, so heart-gripping, as those of the Pikuni Sun priests.

"But it was not his powerful war bonnet alone that protected my father and mother and us their children, in our wanderings in these mountains," Heavy Eyes went on. "When I was seven or eight, maybe nine years old, we left the great camp of the Pikuni, down in Bear River, and came up here to trap beavers. It was late in the day when we crossed the outlet of the lake, and by the time we had set up our lodge in the grove of cottonwoods, there back of the shore, night had come. In the dusk of the evening, my sisters and I began gathering wood for the lodge fire, and my brother, Little Wolf, rounded up our many horses and drove them up on to the ridge, there to graze during the night. He had gone but a little way when, off to his right, a gun boomed, and a bullet struck a big quaking aspen right in front of him. He jumped to the shelter of the tree, shouting to us: 'Rising Wolf! Heavy Eyes! Help! The enemy is shooting at me!'

"'It was a mistake! Don't fear us! We thought that you were a Cree!' the shooter cried out,

in good Pikuni, and came toward my brother, he and many others, making the peace sign all of them, and shouting that they were our friends. And so they were — White Beaver, a Kootenai chief, and nine men of his camp. They embraced my brother, and came down to our lodge with him, and were welcomed by my father.

“White Beaver said to him: ‘I feel sick at what I did, shooting at your son. I might have killed him! We struck your trail in the valley, away below here, and, hurrying along it, saw you all far off, and thought that you were a family of Cree half-bloods. We don’t like them, you know. They have no right to come into these, your and our mountains, and trap and hunt. So we decided to take your horses first, and then kill you all. Oh, I am glad that my aim was bad!’

“‘Say no more about it. All is well. Enter my lodge, you and your men, and we will eat and smoke,’ my father answered, and they accepted his invitation.

“My father quickly filled his big pipe, and handed it to the chief to light. It went from hand to hand around the circle, and there was much talk. We learned that the Kootenai tribe was camping on the Middle Fork of the Two Medicine, well back in the pass in the mountains. My father gave our guests the news of the Pikuni

camp, from which we had come. My mother and sisters prepared a fine feast for us all, broiled dried buffalo tongues, dried camas roots, and dried bull berries.

“Well, when we had finished eating, and the pipe was again going the round of the circle, White Beaver said to my father: ‘Rising Wolf, the terrible mistake that we made, believing that you were Cree half-bloods and starting to wipe you all out by shooting at your son, that mistake is likely to be made at any time, by us, and by those of other tribes that roam these mountains. They are all of them your friends, the Flatheads, Pend d’Oreilles, Stonies, even the far-to-the-west Nez Percés. They all know you well, know your fine name, Rising Wolf. Now, I want to advise you to do something that will prevent us and them from mistaking you for an enemy, and what I have in mind is easy for you to do. It is this: On the trail leading to your camp, and in other places around it, make signs so that all who come may know who you are. It will be easy to do; you will only have to cut bark from trees, and on the bare white wood make a picture of a man, and, above him, a picture of a wolf getting up.’

““My friend, how wise you are! And I, how crazy that I never thought of that! For this that

you have done for me I give you a horse: a three-year-old gray, up there in my band, is your horse. Catch him and take him to your camp when you will,' my father replied.

"The next morning my father blazed trees along the trail to our camp, and other trees around it, and on the white surfaces painted in black the sign for his name, a man and a wolf rising. And thereafter he did that at every camp that we made and along the trail to the camp, and so more than once saved us from attack by war parties of tribes friendly to us, the mountain and west-side tribes. When we had grown a little older, my brother and I made the name signs for him. I painted the best ones, and that made my brother angry. Crippled though I am, I can hold a pencil. Give me one and a sheet of paper and I will make that sign name for you right now, so that you can put it in your thick-writing, for white people to see."

I got out the materials for him, and in a few minutes he made the sketch. Later on, my son retouched it with ink, so that it could be photographed for this book.



DRAWING BY HEAVY EYES OF HIS FATHER'S
(RISING WOLF'S) NAME PAINTING

CHAPTER IV

Rising Wolf and his Children's Fight with the Assiniboines at St. Mary's Lake

OUR hunters returned at noon, their horses staggering under loads of fat elk meat. Old White Grass led the little procession, his hands caked with dried blood. "I did it!" he cried out to us. "I helped butcher those animals, and that young woman elk-killer, she gave me the skin of one of them, and both tongues. Now, help me down off this horse."

We gently eased him down from his saddle, and he tottered across camp and into his lodge, singing softly a song of plenty. Every one of our little party was laughing and chattering as my son and Crow Feathers spread the two elk hides upon the ground, unloaded the meat upon them, and then apportioned it among the lodges. Eagerly each woman seized her share and hurried off with it. I saw Suyo'pekina running to the river with a mass of white-fat-coated elk intestines, and knew what that meant: we were to have a feast of isapwot'sists (stuffed entrails). My mouth watered for them. And, by the way, the Pikuni, in the long-ago, named the Crow

tribe Isapwot'sists — corrupted to Isapwo' — because of their greed for this peculiar dish.

I watched Suyo'pekina wash and wash and re-wash the several yards of entrails, and followed when she carried them to her lodge and dropped them into a pan. In another pan she cut several pounds of elk tenderloin into small pieces, and then stuffed the entrails with them, in the process turning the entrails inside out, and, finally, tying the two ends securely with sinew thread. It was really a sausage, about six feet in length. Coiling it, she laid it upon a bed of hot coals in the fireplace, broiled it thoroughly by frequent turning with two sticks, and then dropped it into a kettle of boiling water and let it stew for a few minutes. She finally put it into a pan, cut it into lengths, and passed them to us, hungrily waiting for the feast. We ate them, and wished that we could have more. By this process all the meat juices had been confined in the intestine casing, and enriched with the white-fat coating. It is the supreme method of cooking meat. I well remember what our friend, Dr. George Bird Grinnell, said, when, long years ago, at St. Mary's Lake, we gave him a feast of isapwot'sists, carefully prepared and cooked by Tail-Feathers-Coming-Over-the-Hill. Said he, "Apikuni, if you would open a café in New York and serve only this dish—well,

with bread and butter and coffee — you could make a large fortune. All the epicures of the city would flock to your place to eat isapwot'sists."

"No city life for me. I would rather be broke, here, than a millionaire in New York," I replied.

In all the lodges of our little camp, our old friends were feasting upon isapwot'sists, broiled liver, tripe, and choice cuts of the fat elk meat, and then, filled to repletion, we all rested upon our comfortable couches. Later in the day, the women went up on the ridge after service berries, and we men again gathered on the shore of the lake to smoke and talk.

"My father once had a strange experience, just over the ridge there, and down on the southernmost little fork of Cutbank River," said Heavy Eyes.

"We were encamped right here, and one morning my father left us to set his beaver traps along the fork. While he was setting the last one of them, he saw a bull moose come out on the opposite shore of the beaver pond, and he shot and killed it. He then got on his horse, crossed the stream at the head of the pond, and rode down to the moose and skinned and butchered it. The meat was quite fat for that time of summer, the Berries Ripe moon, and he was greedy for it, and put a very heavy load of it upon his horse, and

started for camp, leading the animal. He jumped across the narrow outlet of the pond, but the horse balked and refused to follow. He jerked and jerked the lead rope, and made the horse very angry; he shook and shook his head, braced himself, and snorted. Then my father got angry, scolded the horse; told him that he was a bad, a just worthless animal. Maybe the horse understood him; he gave a very loud snort, as much as to say, 'I will show you how worthless I am,' and with all his strength jumped for my father's side of the creek. But just as he jumped, the soft bank gave way under him, and he fell, belly up, into the water and very deep soft mud under it, and lay there pawing the air, unable to turn over and get upon his feet. My father jerked and jerked the lead rope again, but that did no good, and the horse soon ceased struggling, and lay still.

"You lazy, worse-than-nothing animal, you don't half try to get up! Well, lie there, then, and die!' my father, very angry, said to him, and he himself sat down to rest, and almost at once fell asleep, for he was very tired.

"My friends, there, while he slept, he had a vision: a hummingbird came to him, and said, 'I see the trouble that you are in, but don't despair; I will help you. Just you get up and pull on that lead rope again, and all will be well with you.'

“My father awoke, sprang up and again yanked the rope, and at that, the horse struggled hard, turned half over, put his forefeet against the bank and heaved back and rolled on to his belly, got up, and came right up on to the bank. My father was more than surprised; he couldn’t understand what the hummingbird had done to that horse to enable him to turn over and come up out of that sticky-mud place. But there he was, safe upon hard ground, head down, trembling, mud and water dripping down him from the soaked pack of meat, now, of course, wholly spoiled, for never could all the sandy mud be washed from it. So he unloaded it right there, gave it to the wolves, and, finding below a hard, rocky crossing of the outlet, he went back and loaded the horse with the rest of the moose meat. It was long after dark when he came home to us, here, and told us of his strange vision. What a little bird it was, smallest of all the flyers, that, in some strange way, had enabled the horse to get upon his feet and out of that mud hole!”

“Ah! That was very strange, very wonderful!” Curly Bear exclaimed.

“To me, not strange at all,” said White Grass. “Sun gives our brothers, the animals and birds, the power to help us, and he gives just as much of it to a little hummingbird as he does to the

largest of our helpers, to a real-bear, for instance."

"Yes, of course. That is just what Sun does," said Boy Chief; and the others signed that they agreed with him.

Said White Dog: "Heavy Eyes, though your father, Rising Wolf, had powerful sacred helpers, the wolf and the hummingbird, still he and you, his children, did not always escape attack by the enemy."

"Yes, we had to fight them more than once. Our hardest fight with them was at the foot of Lower St. Mary's Lake," Heavy Eyes replied.

"We wintered in Fort Benton, where my father was hunter for the post, and I his helper. It was easy work; we had only to ride out a little way from the fort to find a herd of buffaloes, and we would run them on our fast buffalo-horses, kill many and butcher them, and then *engagés* of the Company, who had followed us with horses and Red River carts, would come and haul the meat and hides to the meat house in the fort. Sometimes, instead of killing buffaloes, we would, for a change, kill a number of antelopes out on the plain, or go over on the Teton, or across the river and up the Shonkin, and kill deer and elk.

"As spring came on, my father became uneasy, and would often say to me, 'Life here within these adobe walls is too confining. I don't breathe

well. I want to go back to the mountains, camp here and there along them, and trap beavers.'

"'Well, then,' I said at last, 'I see that you will never be happy until you go, so ask the factor to let us quit the service of the Company.'

"My father went to him, Big Knife (James Dawson), a very kind man, a very great chief, and asked him to let us go.

"Said he, 'But, Rising Wolf, you and your son Heavy Eyes, you engaged to me for three winters and three summers; you both signed a paper to that effect.'

"'I know we did, but, Chief, the great mountains call me, I want to go and camp and trap along them, and I stifle here in this fort of thick, dried mud walls.'

"'Yes, I know how you feel. I feel as you do. I, too, would like to go up to the mountains for a long camping trip. Well, I will let you and your son go for the summer, until the Falling Leaves moon, but you must promise to trade to me the beaver skins you get, and not to the North traders, up there on North Big River' [the Saskatchewan].

"My father agreed to that, and we left the fort the next day, with two teams and wagons, and our band of thirty saddle horses. We were: my father and mother; my sister Lizzie, widowed,

and her three little children; my woman and myself. I had taken her two months before this, and we did not yet know each other very well.

“From the fort we headed straight for St. Mary’s Lakes, my father’s favorite hunting grounds. On our way we camped at the edge of the pines on the North Fork of Little River [Milk River], and there my father had a bad vision: a vision of a big snake. He awoke, and awoke us and told us about it, and said that we must be very careful, very watchful, for a big snake vision meant that danger was not far ahead of us. We knew that he was right about that. On the following day, when we moved on, I had my sister Lizzie drive my wagon, my woman follow with our band of horses, and I rode well in the lead, watching carefully for enemies, but I saw none, saw nothing to alarm me during the day.

“Late in the afternoon we crossed the outlet of Lower St. Mary’s Lake, and made camp in the edge of the narrow belt of timber at the foot of the lake, where we had so often camped and several times there wintered. We had not then given the lakes a white men’s name; we just called them ‘Lakes Inside,’ as the Pikuni still name them. It was some years later that, with a Black Robe, my father set up a big cross at the

foot of the lower lake, and named the two lakes after the sacred woman of the Black Robes, she who, they claim, had a son without ever having a man . . . ”

“Another one of the Black Robes’ big lies!” Raven Chief growled.

“Yes!” the others all exclaimed.

“A lie, of course,” Heavy Eyes continued. “But on this afternoon, when we had made camp and were eating our evening meal, my father said something that I never forgot: ‘Mother, you, my children,’ he said, when he had filled his pipe and was comfortably smoking, ‘these lakes here, and the mountains surrounding them, make the most beautiful place in all this great country of ours. It is so very beautiful, so wonderful, that, I am sure, the whites will some day control it.’

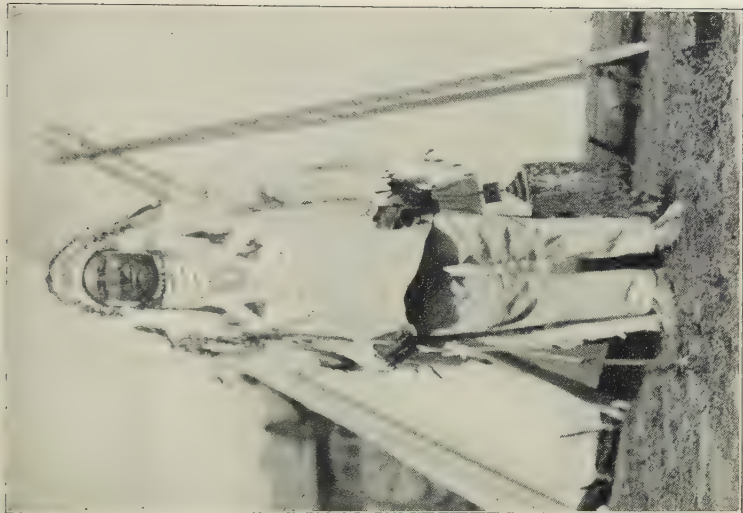
“My mother laughed. ‘You do have crazy thoughts sometimes; all that the whites want or ever will want of this country is the beaver and other fur that we here trap for them,’ she told him. But how right he was!”

“Ai! Your father had wonderful power from Sun; he could foresee what was to happen,” said old White Grass.

“Well, the night passed quietly,” Heavy Eyes went on. “Morning came, and, after eating, my father and I went down the river a little way, and



RAVEN CHIEF



WHITE CALF, SON OF THE OLD CHIEF
WHITE CALF

set all of our fourteen beaver traps, and caught some big trout, and I killed a goose.

"That afternoon, while I was resting in our lodge, I suddenly had a bad pain in my back. It continued to hurt, and I knew that was a bad sign; that it confirmed my father's snake vision. I was sure that danger of some kind was close to us. I became very uneasy; went out many times before dark, and looked all around, but could see nothing suspicious. At sundown, with my woman, I went out upon the big prairie below the lake, rounded up our band of horses and brought them into the timber, near our lodge, and there put hobbles on the leaders. Night came. I sat back on my couch, watching my woman, on the other side of the fire, cooking the goose that I had killed. She was roasting it, turning it often, browning it nicely, but I felt that I did not want to eat it. The pain in my back became more severe. Our little dog, the only one that we had, was sick; he whined pitifully. Everything was wrong, everything pointed to danger, terrible danger coming upon us.

"When the goose was well cooked, my woman divided it among us. My father took but a mouthful of his share, and set the dish aside. I ate but little of the piece of breast on my plate. My father kept looking at me, and I at him, and

I knew that he, too, sensed danger near us, but would say nothing to alarm the women and children. Came bedtime, and I asked my woman to go out with me for a last look at the horses, and, when we were among them, and out of hearing of the lodge, I said to her: 'We are in danger; I can just feel that it is close. My father's vision of the big snake, my aching back, our little dog's sickness, all these are warnings that we are in danger. If anything happens, if we are separated when the danger breaks upon us, you must come to me with my other gun and ammunition, and reload it for me as fast as I shoot it.'

"'You know that I am no coward. I will help you so long as I can stand upon my feet,' she replied; and with a last look at the horses we went back into the lodge and to bed.

"I couldn't sleep. I lay awake, feeling sure that something bad was going to happen, and after a time I heard a commotion among the horses; those that I had hobbled were jumping about and snorting. I thought it possible that a real-bear was trying to kill one of them. I awoke my woman and told her that I was going out to learn what was troubling the horses. My father spoke, said to me in a very low voice, to cry out if I saw that we were in danger. We had none of us undressed, not even Lizzie's children; we hadn't

even taken off our moccasins, because of the uneasiness that we felt, the fear that we were in great danger.

"Upon hands and knees I crept from the lodge and out toward the horses; they were no longer jumping about and snorting; they were walking, leaving the timber, walking free of hobbles, so I knew that enemies had them. There was no moon, but the stars, in a clear sky, gave some light. I got up and, sneaking along the outer edge of the timber, saw a man come out of it, leading a horse.

"I fired at him, and he gave a loud yell and dropped to the ground, and the horse ran back into the timber. By the flash of my rifle I saw that the man was an Assiniboine. I could not be mistaken about that, for, at the Big Knives' fort at the mouth of Elk River,¹ I had seen many of that tribe, seen the way they dressed and the way they wore their hair.

"When I shot the man, my father and my woman and my sister Lizzie rushed out of the lodge to help me, and enemies in the timber with our horses fired at them. They got behind our two wagons, still loaded with sacks of provisions and other stuff, and I ran to them, and took my other gun from my woman, handing her the one

¹ Fort Union, at the mouth of the Yellowstone.

that I had fired, to reload. Lizzie had a gun, a smoothbore North Trader's flintlock, just like the one that my father carried. She was very angry. She shouted the war song of the Pikuni; she cried out to the enemy, 'You dogs! You shall not kill my children!' She fired at a man who was very close to us, and I saw him fall.

"The enemy continued firing at us, and we at them, or, rather, at the places where we saw the flashes of their guns. They were protected by the timber, we by our wagons, standing about thirty steps in front of our lodge. My mother and Lizzie's three children were still in the lodge, for my father had told them to remain there, and to lie flat upon the ground, so that they would not be struck by the shots of the enemy. He had told them, too, that they must be still, not once cry out. But now, while we were shooting at the enemy and they at us, Mary, the oldest girl, began to cry, and then her two sisters began to shriek, calling for their mother, and my mother tried to quiet them, as we could hear, and Lizzie shouted to them to close their mouths and lie still.

"The enemy also heard that outcry in the lodge. They are cunning, those Assiniboines, and they have hearts as cold as winter ice. While some of them continued to fire at us, in the shelter of the wagons, others sneaked to the back side of the

lodge, with the intent to enter and kill those within it. They began pulling the pins, so that they could raise the lodge skin and crawl in under it, and my mother heard them, and came rushing out to us with the children. At the same time others of the enemy began shooting at us from a new position, a point straight north of the wagons.

"At that, my father cried to us, 'They will soon be shooting from the lodge! If they surround us, we will be wiped out! We must take to the timber, follow me!'

"'Yes! We follow! You children, keep your mouths wholly closed!' said Lizzie.

"'We must creep, keep close to the ground until well away from here,' I said.

"'Yes, of course. Now, follow me,' my father answered.

"We crept for a distance of a hundred steps or more, down through the grove, then got upon our feet and stood for a short time, listening. The enemy were still firing at the wagons; we could not hear any of them coming upon our trail. We went on through the timber to the outlet of the lake, and down its shore to the wide and shallow ford, where, carrying the children, we crossed. By that time the enemy had ceased firing; had discovered, no doubt, that we had left the wagons.

We went on down the rocky, east shore, left it in a grove of quaking aspens, and climbed high up on the big ridge, and there rested. Our hearts were low, oh, terribly low.

"My mother began to cry: 'We lose everything,' she moaned; 'our horses, our wagons, all of our clothing, all the things dear to us because of the many winters that we have so carefully kept them!'

"My woman cried with her; and the children, too. But Lizzie, ha! she was brave-hearted: 'We have whole skins! We have good health and strength! We can get more horses and wagons, soon replace everything that we have lost! It matters not, the bird's head!'¹ she said, and so fiercely, that my father and I laughed.

"Came morning. We saw our horses, grazing out upon the big prairie below the lake. Smoke was rising from our lodge, men were going out of it, into it, and others were examining the things in our wagons. When Sun had traveled a little way up along his trail in the blue, some of the enemy drove in the horses, put on some of them all the saddles that we had, and packed others with such of our things as they wanted. They then brought a lot of dry wood and heaped it around the wagons, and around the lodge, and set it afire. Again

¹ A slang expression, meaning that the speaker defies bad luck.

my woman and my mother and the children cried, as they watched our things go up in great flames and smoke. Lizzie shook her fist at the enemy, called them Assiniboine dogs. My father and I said nothing; we were thinking how hard it would be, how long it would take us to replace all that we had lost. We watched the enemy go down the big prairie with our horses, and, at the mouth of Swift River, cross the larger river, and go east up over the ridge. We knew that it would be useless to return to our camping-place; that we could find there nothing of any use to us. We abandoned our traps. We got up and struck out over the ridge for the Middle Fork of Little River, and along the way I killed a she blacktail, one without child and fat. So we had food, ate plenty of it, well broiled upon hot red coals. And Lizzie laughed: 'Well, anyhow, we killed two of those Assiniboine dogs! Again I say, it matters not, the bird's head!'

"My father and I laughed with her, but not yet could my mother and my woman even smile.

"When, down on Bear River, we had parted from our people, we knew that they were soon to go up to the mountains to get new lodge poles. We therefore traveled south, and, just below here, on this Two Medicine Lodges River, found the great camp of them, and went straight to the

lodge of my uncle, Three Suns. Many relatives and friends came hurrying in, to learn why we had come on foot, and when my father had told that, at the Lakes Inside, the Assiniboines had attacked us, burned our lodge and wagons and all our belongings, and gone off with our horses, they pitied us, and said that they would at once give us of their property to replace the things that we had lost. Three Suns gave us five horses, others gave one, two, three, or more, to a total of twenty-five. A number of women gave their tannings of new white buffalo leather, and made a big lodge for us. Others gave lodge linings, parflèches, deer leather for clothing, dried foods, cooking utensils, saddles, axes and knives, sewing implements, traps, buffalo robes and blankets for bedding. Before Sun set, that day, all that we had lost was replaced, except, of course, our wagons and harness.

“We moved into our new lodge, and in the evening came Three Suns and other chiefs to smoke with my father.

“Said Three Suns, as soon as the pipe had been lit: ‘Well, Rising Wolf, brother-in-law, anyhow, the enemy did not get your sacred Wolf war bonnet.’

“‘No! The first thing that I did, when I knew that we were attacked, was to sling it, in

its case, upon my back, and then I took up my gun and ran out to help my son,' he replied.

"'Well, you can lend me the bonnet. I am going to lead a party of my good warriors against the Assiniboines. They shall suffer for what they did to you,' said he.

"'Take it; the bonnet is yours so long as you want it,' my father answered, and passed it to him.

"Two days later, Three Suns led a party of eighty men against the Assiniboines, and, after long search, found them encamped far down on Little River, attacked and killed a number of them who were out hunting buffalo, and took their weapons and horses, and returned to us in the following moon. They came into camp with a rush, all painted up and wearing their war clothes and singing mightily a war song. Three Suns led them straight to our lodge, and to us standing in front of it, and he said to my father: 'Here it is. I return it to you, your powerful war bonnet. With its sacred help, we wiped out many of the enemy and took their horses. And now get ropes and catch that black horse and that gray one; they are two of my own taking. I give them to you.'

"There! My talk ends. Look, my friends, see how beautifully Sun is painting the top of Rising Wolf Mountain — my father's mountain."

CHAPTER V

About Joseph Kipp, Raven Quiver, True Friend of the Pikuni

FOR several days our talk has largely been about the passing of the buffalo, and of great adventure that we here and there had, in pursuit of the fast-dwindling herds. Inevitably, in this connection, my old friends have had a lot to say about Mastwun'opachis, Raven Quiver, the late Joseph Kipp, nearest and dearest of all my friends of the days that are gone.

Curly Bear said of him: "Raven Quiver was the strongest, truest friend that the Pikuni ever had."

Said Many Tail Feathers: "He was the most generous man who ever traveled these plains. He was always eager to help the poor and those sorrowful of heart."

"Aiyah'! And how dearly he loved little children!" White Dog exclaimed.

"When he went to the Sand Hills, we lost our strongest protector, our most powerful shield against the wiles of the whites," said Raven Chief.

And to all that, I heartily agreed.

"Those men in the Great Father's town, those



JOSEPH KIPP
1889

mean givers of names to our mountains, at least they might have named one of these peaks for Raven Quiver, or Kipah, as we mostly called him," said Boy Chief.

"Old friends," said I, "for two days I shall have but little talk with you: I am going to write, for my thick-writing, the life history of our old friend."

"Yes. Do that. Be sure to tell how kind and generous he was," Curly Bear replied.

It is with heavy heart and faltering hand that I begin this task. Would that I did not have to do it. Would our old friend were alive, and with us here, to-day. Joseph Kipp died at Browning, Montana, on December 12, 1913.

Any biography of Joseph Kipp would be incomplete without mention of his remarkable parents. His father, James Kipp, was born in Montreal in 1798, and was a member of a noted family of French *émigrés*; his mother was of English and Scotch parentage. In the early twenties, James Kipp came to the United States, and in 1828 entered the service of the American Fur Company. His ability, bravery, and trustworthiness were soon recognized by the Chouteaus, heads of the Company, and so long as he remained in its service he held high positions in the Upper Missouri country. Catlin, in 1832, found him in charge of the post in the Mandan village, and has

much to say of him in his "Eight Years." Maximilian, Prince of Wied, was his guest the following year, and speaks very highly of him in his "Travels." When the Company determined to build a post in the extreme Upper Missouri country, he was the only one of its employees who would undertake the difficult and dangerous task of establishing residence in the hunting ground of the dreaded Pikuni. With a couple of keel boats, loaded with tools and trade goods, and a few Cordeliers, he left Fort Union early in the spring of 1833, and that summer built Fort Mackenzie at the mouth of the Marias River, the Pikuni and the Gros Ventres never once interfering with the work. In fact, both tribes became his lifelong friends from that date. One of the Cordeliers in his party was Baptiste Rondin, who will be remembered by all old-timers in Fort Benton. To the day of his death, in the nineties, Rondin always wore the costume of the old Cordeliers: a blanket, hooded capote, and trousers and leggings of the same material.

Pioneer though he was, and builder of many posts, but one landmark in all the Missouri country bears James Kipp's name, and that is Kipp's Rapids, a treacherous bit of water in the Missouri River, between the mouth of the Judith and Cow Island.

James Kipp died in St. Charles, Missouri, in the summer of 1881, aged eighty-three years.

Mrs. James Kipp, or Sah-kwi-ah-ki (Earth Woman), as I, in common with the Pikuni, loved to call her, was a woman of most noble character and kindly disposition. I cannot speak too highly of her. She was a second mother to me in the days of my youth on the buffalo plains. She was a friend to all the poor and afflicted, white and red, as was her inseparable companion, an Arica-ree named Crow Woman.

Sah-kwi-ah-ki was no less than the daughter of the great Mandan chief Man-to-to-pah (Four Bears) of whom Catlin wrote: "He is one of the finest and most courteous gentlemen that I ever met."

I believe that Sah-kwi-ah-ki was born about 1815, as she often told me that she was just married to James Kipp when Catlin visited her people. Even more vividly than that great artist-writer-philanthropist describes it, she loved to tell of the terror her people felt when the Yellowstone, the first steamboat to ascend the Missouri, appeared rounding the bend of the river below the Mandan village. Her father, she said, was one of the few who did not flee for the hills when it blew its hoarse, loud whistle and let off a cloud of roaring steam. And, firmly clasping his

hand, she remained at his side as the strange monster drew in to the bank, although she was so afraid of it that she was near fainting.

In the closing years of the buffalo trade, wherever, owing to the shifting of the herds, we built a post, Sah-kwi-ah-ki and Crow Woman were ever with us. They always had quarters of their own, a comfortable room with a broad and well-filled fireplace. Perhaps the most pleasant of my memories of those days are of the evenings I spent with them before their cheerful fire. Almost always we had a little feast of roast buffalo tongue; or pemmican and stewed service berries; or choice roasted dry meat, with dried o-sak, or back fat. And, oh, the tales that they told me as we feasted, told in Pikuni instead of their own tongue, so that I could understand. Tales of their gods; of life with different tribes; of the character and adventures of various factors of the American Fur Company: Kenneth Mackenzie, James Dawson, Alexander Culbertson, and that execrable Harvey, who turned loose a cannon loaded with trade balls at a crowd of peaceably inclined Pikuni men, women, and children, come to the fort to trade.

Both Sah-kwi-ah-ki and Crow Woman did beautiful embroidery with colored porcupine quills. I have especially in mind a fine cow buffalo robe that was on the flesh side a blaze of rain-

bow hues. In the center was a sun all of two feet in diameter, and surrounding it symbols of the moon and stars. That robe they sold to a Crow chief for fifteen fine, plain cow robes, and those they sold to a fur-buyer for one hundred and twenty dollars in gold. Although they were very generous, they were also keen traders, and the gifts to them of robes and furs from admiring friends were many. Every spring they had a good number of robes and beaver and wolf skins to sell to the highest bidder of the fur-buyers, and the proceeds of these sales eventually amounted to several thousand dollars.

Came the winter of 1882-83, the dreadful "Starvation Winter" of the Pikuni. The buffalo had disappeared, the agent for the tribe had misrepresented its condition in his annual reports to the Secretary of the Interior, and the people starved. More than five hundred died from want of food. Although no kin to them, these two noble women did all that they could to alleviate their distress; they spent all of their savings of years in buying food for them, and kept life in many an emaciated man, woman, and child until the authorities came to their relief in the spring.

Such was the character of the mother of Joseph Kipp, and of Crow Woman, her lifelong friend and companion. In time of need they gave their

all. Surely, if there be a happy hunting ground, as the Mandans claim there is, the shadows of those two noble women are there at rest.

Joseph Kipp was born in the American Fur Company's post at the mouth of the Yellowstone, Fort Union, in 1847, and most of his youthful days were passed there, and in the Company's newer post, Fort Benton. He thus became acquainted with the various tribes of the country, Pikuni, Gros Ventres, Sioux, Crows, Mandans, and Aricarees, and learned to speak the language of each tribe. While at Fort Union in the early sixties an incident occurred which foreshadowed the character of the man-to-be: The Crows had surprised a wandering family of the Pikunis, and killed all of them except a son of about young Kipp's age. Him they kept a slave, a herder of horses and helper in the chase. He met Kipp when the Crows came to Fort Union to trade, and cried as he told of the loss of his parents, and of his sufferings, and his longing to return to his own people. Kipp went at once to his father and persuaded him to buy the boy from his captors. That was no sooner done than the young Pikuni was stricken with smallpox, then epidemic in the country. Young Kipp did not do anything by halves; he took the boy into his own room, and nursed him, and kept him smeared with oil,

and brought him safely back to health, and sent him to Fort Benton and his own people by the first up-boat of the season. This boy became a leader among the Pikuni, a great warrior, and wise counselor, in affairs of the tribe. He was Tail-Feathers-Coming-over-the-Hill, recently deceased.

In 1860 James Kipp practically retired from the fur trade, and thereafter, until his death, passed the greater part of his time on his farm in Missouri. During his long absences from Montana he left his son and the boy's mother in charge of various factors of the American Fur Company, mostly with James Dawson, in charge of Fort Benton. In 1865, when George Steel and Matt Carroll bought the Company's Fort Benton post, young Kipp entered their employ and began his adventurous life.

George Steel had at that time a black horse, the swiftest and best-trained buffalo runner in the country. One of young Kipp's duties was the care of the animal, which was kept in the stables in the rear of the fort. Upon going to the stables one morning, Kipp found the corral gate open, the padlock of the stable door broken, and the black horse missing. There could be no doubt as to the whereabouts of the animal. The Pikuni had long wanted it, had offered fabulous prices

for it; some member of the tribe had taken it, and it was in the big camp just over the hill on the Teton. From there it did not seem possible to recover the horse. Several of the Pikuni had recently been killed by some of the miners in Last Chance Gulch, and the tribe had sworn vengeance against the whites. Even the traders and their employees were forbidden to enter the camp.

Young Kipp felt so badly over the loss of the horse that he became actually sick. He begged to be allowed to make an attempt to recover it, but Steel would not let him leave the fort. The boy's life, he said, was worth more than all the horses in the country. Kipp chafed under this order. To make matters worse, old Four Bears, camp crier for the Pikuni chiefs, came into the fort and bragged long and loudly about what was being accomplished with the black buffalo runner. "White Antelope has the best buffalo horse that ever was in this country," he would say. "It is a big, powerful, swift black horse. A beautiful horse. Yesterday he chased a herd with it, and killed nine big, fat buffalo cows."

And so the old camp crier continued to boast about the horse, and White Antelope's successful runs with it, until he drove young Kipp almost mad; and one night, regardless of consequences,

he stole out of the fort and went over the hill to the Pikuni camp. With a blanket wrapped about him, Indian fashion, and with a six-shooter in his hand, he wandered about among the lodges until he found White Antelope's otter medicine painted home, the huge, black painted animals showing up plainly on the fire-illuminated lodge skin. Within, the warrior was giving a feast; as young Kipp came near he could hear the man telling his guests how he had entered the fort corral and stable, and taken the wonderful black runner.

The night was very dark. Several horses were picketed close to the lodge and it was only by feeling them that Kipp could tell which one was the animal he sought. The third that he examined was the black. He cut its tie rope, and, using the short end for a bridle, mounted and thundered through the big camp for the hills and the fort. At the first jump of the horse, White Antelope and his guests rushed from the lodge, and the former fired his gun in the direction of young Kipp's retreat, and shouted: "Stop him! Stop him! He is riding off my black horse!"

There followed a general rush from the lodges. Many shots were fired, a dozen or more men mounted conveniently tied horses and gave pursuit, but not a ball took effect, and the boy easily

outrode the most persistent of his followers and triumphantly entered the fort.

It was now Kipp's turn to boast. Whenever old Four Bears came into the trade room, the boy would cry out in imitation of a warrior counting his coups: "In the Pikuni camp on the Teton. That was the place. There, in the dark night, I entered. I wandered among the lodges and found that which I sought, a swift, black horse; the best, the fastest buffalo horse in all the land. I took the horse and fled. Men fired at me; men mounted and followed me. I rode safely away from them. I have the horse."

Old Four Bears did not like that, and one day, when Kipp ended his sing-song boast, he hissed at the boy: "I have a message for you. White Antelope bids me tell you that, the first time he meets you outside, you die."

That meeting soon came. Kipp went out with Baptiste Rondin, post hunter, for meat for the fort, and, topping the hill, saw White Antelope coming on the trail. Rondin was away back with the men driving the meat carts, and, though he died for it, the boy would not turn back to him for help. He rode straight on, rifle cocked and ready, and a terrible fear in his heart. As warrior and boy approached one another, they glared grimly, the boy ready to raise his rifle and fire

should the other make a single hostile move. Perhaps White Antelope sensed the dogged determination of his youthful enemy; maybe he was, after all, somewhat of a coward; anyhow, he made no move of offense. The two met, and passed and young Kipp would not turn in his saddle and look back, though his skin kept twitching in expectation of a bullet puncture, and whether the Indian looked back or not, he never knew. So ended his first experience in real danger. Afterward White Antelope became his friend. For recovering the horse, George Steel rewarded Kipp with a year's schooling in St. Joe, Missouri.

In 1869 young Kipp became an army scout, and was stationed at Fort Shaw when Colonel Baker was ordered to find and wipe out Black Weasel and the warriors of his band of the Pikuni, for the murder of Malcolm Clark. The command struck the trail of Heavy Runner's band, instead, and Kipp in vain explained that it was the wrong one. All Indians were alike to Baker, and he ordered Kipp to lead on, detailing two soldiers to keep at his back and shoot him if he made a false move. So it was that, at break of day on January 1, 1870, the soldiers looked down at the lodges of the friendly camp from the edge of the cutbank on the Marias, and again Kipp pleaded with Baker not to molest them, but his pleadings were

without avail. Baker ordered his men to shoot, and to spare none, and a dreadful carnage ensued. Men, women, children, and babes in arms were indiscriminately killed, only three or four men of the big camp escaping. Kipp afterward had a hard time in convincing the Pikuni that he had tried his best to save their kindred, but they finally believed him.

In the year 1868, preceding his scouting experience, Kipp, Charles Thomas, and John Wrenn prospected along the foot of the Rockies as far north as Edmonton, and were probably the first gold-seekers to examine that long stretch of country. They found no gold. On their way north they left a pair of pincers at a camp on a small stream not far north of the Canadian line, and did not miss them for several days, when they were needed for use in reshoeing one of their bulls, and Kipp had to go back for them. He named the stream where they had been left, Pincer Creek, the name that it bears to-day.

The little party was not well received at Fort Edmonton. The Hudson's Bay Company factor, his employees, and the Red River half-breeds camped there, had no love for the "Long Knives" as they called the men of the United States. The Hudson's Bay Company was particularly bitter in its attitude toward them, for the "Long

Knife" American Fur Company had largely taken away from it its trade with the Blackfeet tribes. Winter had set in with deep snow and extremely cold weather, and, rather than take the risk of the long trip back at that season, Thomas and Wrenn decided to remain at the inhospitable post until spring. Kipp, however, was so homesick that he could not stay with them. On Christmas day he struck out south with a young French Canadian, each riding a good horse, and carrying a buffalo robe and a couple of blankets for bedding. They took no food, expecting to kill all the meat they wanted. They found, however, that the uncertain buffalo had that winter deserted the plains country bordering the mountains. On the first and the second day out they managed to kill a rabbit, but thereafter for some days they went entirely without food. Not a rabbit was to be seen; nor even an Arctic owl. Wolves, however, were plentiful, and as shy as they were numerous. The men tried all kinds of ruses to get a shot at them and failed every time.

One evening when they made camp, and so hungry and weak were they that they had barely strength to unsaddle their horses and gather fuel for the fire, they uncovered a mouse nest and killed three of the little rodents. The Frenchman was for roasting and eating them at once, but

Kipp had a better plan. He proposed to use them for wolf bait. Some distance from where they had unsaddled, he built another fire, a small one, and, splitting open the mice and sprinkling them with strychnine, he laid them near the fire, and returned to his comrade and went to bed. The fading light of day revealed several shadowy forms hovering near the decoy fire. The Frenchman prayed his Bon Dieu and the Virgin to give him and his comrade just one wolf, else they must perish from starvation right there. And lo! in the morning they found a wolf frozen stiff near the other fireplace, a victim of the poisoned baits. They filled their little copper tea-pail with its fat meat, boiled it thoroughly, and ate and were saved. The wolf meat lasted them until they reached Belly River. There they found buffaloes, and, killing a fat cow, they made camp on an island and had a real feast. From there on to Fort Benton the plains were black with buffaloes and they fared well. Their last day of the long, hard trip was an eventful one. At the Goose Bill, and again, when approaching the Teton, they were chased by hunters from a Blood camp, and both times were nearly caught by the hostiles.

After the Baker massacre at the Marias, Kipp left the army, and, forming a partnership with Charles Thomas, became a trader with the In-

dians, as his father had been before him. It was in the spring of this year, 1870, that a new United States Marshal was appointed, with headquarters at Helena, and his first official act was a proclamation that he intended to enforce rigorously the laws relating to the introduction and the possession of liquor in the Indian country. This was a terrible blow to Fort Benton, itself in the "Indian country."

A word as to Fort Benton at that time. West of Sioux City, Iowa, it was the only settlement of any importance on the upper river, and the only one on the Montana plains. There was the old fort, built in 1855, and strung along in a row above it, and facing the river, were a few log adobe buildings and shacks, the stores of I. G. Baker & Co., T. C. Power & Brother, Murphy, Neil & Co., J. D. Weatherwax, the Overland Hotel,* and a few combination saloons and gambling-halls. But, small as the place was, it was headquarters for all the traders of the country and the center of the great fur-trade of the Northwest. The steamboats that came up every spring from far St. Louis with goods for the trader and supplies for Helena, and other mountain camps, went back with mountainous loads of tarpaulin-covered bales of buffalo robes and pelts of beaver, wolf, deer, elk, and antelope."

The Bentonites took proper toll of the traffic to and from the mountain camps and let it go at that. The fabulously rich finds of gold in Alder Gulch, Last Chance, and other places had no lure for them. Why toil with pick and shovel when in the fur-trade, or in wolfing, they had a certain sure rich mine, they argued. And so they traded and wolfed and prospered. The winter trade for tanned robes paid best, and any one could go out on the plains with a few bottles of strychnine and return in a couple of months with several thousand dollars' worth of wolf pelts. All told there were not more than two hundred men engaged in this trading and trapping. Their profits were large. They were all friends, all brave and experienced and honest. Never anywhere else in the West was there gathered such a friendly, congenial, generous, and venturesome set of men as were these. They were really one big jolly family.

Until the new marshal, Harding by name, slipped into Fort Benton and confiscated several outfits of liquor, the traders could not believe that he really meant to interfere with their business. They then realized that their occupation was gone unless they could devise some way to outwit him. The Blackfeet, the Gros Ventres, and other tribes, demanded liquor along with

trade articles of necessity and luxury, and, if the Long Knives could not supply it, they would, they said, transfer their trade to the Hudson's Bay Company posts in the North where they could get all the good rum they wanted.

It was to Kipp that the chiefs gave their ultimatum. He thought over the problem for some days and then sought out his old friend and prospecting partner, Charles Thomas.

"Charlie, I have it," he said. "We'll go across the line and build a post where the marshal can't touch us."

"Yes, but he will nab us on the trail. It is all of a hundred and fifty miles from here to the Canadian border and somewhere along the trail Harding would sure overtake us and seize our whole outfit," Thomas objected.

But when Kipp unfolded his whole plan for getting the contraband goods across the line, Thomas readily agreed to it.

Harding was in Fort Benton, closely watching every movement of the traders. Kipp slipped away on horseback one dark night and went to Helena, where he bought seventy-five cases of high-proof alcohol—seven hundred and fifty gallons—to be delivered at the forks of the Missouri just below town. Murphy, Neil & Co. were the sellers. They readily agreed to recase the

spirits in strong boxes and bind them with wire, but, before the work was finished Harding appeared and watched Kipp's every move. As the saying is, "he smelled a rat." A dozen times a day and often at night he would saunter into the Overland stables and see if Kipp's big black horse was still there in its stall. He had his eyes on the animal or its owner practically all the time. He watched what was put aboard the Bull trains bound for Fort Benton and he noted all arrivals from there.

After about a week of this espionage upon his every movement, Kipp decided to put an end to it. He got George Scott, a Fort Benton man, to ride his black horse out of town at one o'clock in the morning, just after Harding had made his last call at the stables before retiring. Scott was to make no stop until well out from the mouth of Prickly Pear Canyon, and there he was to leave the road and cut across to the mouth of Sun River where he would find Thomas with a wagon outfit.

At daylight the following morning Harding missed the black horse. The stable men would give him no information about it, so after a hasty breakfast he saddled up and struck out for Fort Benton, believing that Kipp had gone back there after in some way getting a load of spirits out of town. He was no more than well out on the

road than Kipp was *en route* to the river with the alcohol. There he got the teamsters to help him make a raft of the seventy-five cases, piling them two deep, and binding them firmly together with long poles and plenty of strong rope. On this, the oddest craft that ever floated upon the Missouri, he set out for the mouth of Sun River, and for three days had a wet time of it. At every little rapid the water swept over the top of the raft, and a hundred times a day he had to jump overboard and push it off a sandbar. At sunset of the third day, he arrived at the mouth of Sun River and found Thomas awaiting him there with three four-horse teams and wagons and two teamsters. Scott was also there and agreed to join the outfit as cook. The raft was no sooner brought to shore than the men began loading the cases into the wagons, and within an hour the start was made for the North by the way of the Indian and Red River cart trail, which later became known as the "Sun River Trail."

Three days later, just after crossing the North Fork of Milk River, the outfit saw a lone horseman coming fast on their trail. "It is the marshal, all right," said Kipp, "and we may as well stop right here and stand him off."

Sure enough it was Harding. How he finally got on to the trail of the traders he never told. He

passed the first and second wagon and rode on to the third, which Kipp was driving at the time.

"Well, Joe, I've got you at last," he said; "just turn around and head for Fort Benton."

"Harding, you are just twenty minutes too late," Kipp answered. "You should have overtaken us on the far side of the creek back there."

"Oh, come. No joshing. This is serious business. Turn your team," the marshal insisted.

"Harding, right here you are no more a marshal of the United States than I am, for right here we are in Canada; the North Fork of Milk River is the line," said Kipp.

Harding, in his surprise at this statement, almost fell from his horse, and it was several minutes before he spoke. The international boundary line had not been surveyed and marked. No one knew where the monuments would eventually stand, but it was generally believed that Chief Mountain and the North Fork of Milk River were upon, or very close, one way or the other, to the fifty-ninth degree of north latitude.

Said Harding, after some quick thinking: "You have no proof that we are in Canada. I'll take chances that we are south of the line. I arrest you all for having liquor in your possession in the Indian country. Come, turn your outfit and we will strike out for Fort Benton."

Kipp laughed. "Marshal," said he, "you have no proof that we are not north of the line. Anyhow, we take the chance that we are in Canada and we are five against you — five to one. Right here we stand you off."

Harding argued and threatened, but his words were wasted, and he no doubt realized that he could not prove that the outfit was in United States territory; he suddenly wheeled his horse around and, with not so much as a parting wave of the hand, took the back trail and never stopped 'loping his tired animal so long as he was in sight. Later, when the line was surveyed, the spot where he had tried to make the arrest was found to be about three hundred yards south of it.

The outfit went on north to Belly River and there built a trading post, naming it Fort Stand-off, in commemoration of their interview with the marshal. While the place was being built, the teams were kept busy hauling trade goods and provisions from Fort Benton, and with the coming of winter the Blackfeet, Bloods, and Pikuni gathered on the Belly and Old Man's Rivers according to their agreement with Kipp. The country was black with buffaloes and the Indians were industrious; by the time spring came, the warehouse held nearly three thousand fine robes and more than two thousand small skins, mainly antelope

and wolf, and the trade room was bare of goods. As will be noted later, Kipp's invasion of this Hudson's Bay Company territory had unforeseen and surprising results; the building of Fort Standoff proved to be of momentous consequence to the Canadians.

The arrival of the Fort Standoff robes in Fort Benton was the cause of as much excitement as is a new discovery in a mining camp. The season there had been a fallow one. Under the watchful eye of Marshal Harding, traders had been unable to make a move, and they lost no time in preparing to invade the North country as Kipp had so successfully done. The leader of the rush was John J. Healy, one of the bravest and most picturesque characters of the Northwest. He was later many times sheriff of Chouteau County, and still later the leading trader of Dawson City, Alaska, where he made and lost a fortune of more than a million dollars.

Following Kipp's arrival at the fort, some Red River half-breeds came in from the North and brought word that the factor of the Hudson's Bay Company at Fort Calgary had sworn vengeance against the American invaders of his territory and was going to clean out Fort Standoff. Now, not many years before this time, the Hudson's Bay Company, through its Fort Edmonton

factor, a man named Hardesty, had incited the North Blackfeet to capture and destroy Fort Benton and all its inmates, and they would have succeeded in doing it had not they told the Pikuni women living there what was to happen, and warned them to leave their white men. The women, of course, frustrated the plan by telling their white men, to whom most of them were devotedly attached. Bearing this in mind, Healy formed a copartnership with A. B. Hamilton, and together they built a post at the junction of the St. Mary's and Belly Rivers, that was large enough and strong enough to withstand the assault of any force that the Hudson's Bay Company could send against it. The place was built on the plan of Fort Benton, and real cannon were mounted in the bastions, with plenty of "grape and canister" beside them, in the shape of twenty-five-pound sacks of trade balls. The total cost of the place was twenty thousand dollars. And most appropriately it was named Fort Whoop-up, in accordance with the owners' intention of "whooping-up" things in the North country.

Kipp and Thomas, meantime, purchased a bull train with a part of their winter profits, and, abandoning Fort Standoff, built Fort Kipp at the junction of Belly and Old Man's Rivers. It

was not a pretentious place, merely some rough log cabins put up to form three sides of a square and there was no stockade across the fourth or south side facing the river. Different from Healy and Hamilton, they rightly believed that a fortified post was not necessary. The only trouble that took place the following winter was the killing of Calf Shirt, chief of the Bloods, at Fort Kipp, and the whole tribe was glad when his end came. He was a man of vicious temper, and had killed many of his own people just for the fun of seeing them drop.

During the summer and fall, great quantities of legitimate trade goods were hauled with bull trains to the two forts from Fort Benton, and a plenty of alcohol was brought out by fast four-horse teams, despite the watchfulness of the marshal. The three tribes of the Blackfeet and the Surcees and Gros Ventres brought in large numbers of robes and wolf and antelope skins, and trade was good, Kipp getting as much of it as his rivals in the more pretentious post. The success of the two firms was so marked that during the ensuing summer other Bentonites came north to get a share of the trade, notably J. D. Weatherwax, who built a post just below Fort Kipp. The following winter, 1873-74, all of the posts did a fine trade, something like nine

thousand tanned robes going in to Fort Benton the following spring.

The Hudson's Bay Company, meantime, had been urging the Dominion Government to come to its aid and suppress the American traders, and its plea was finally granted, a large detachment of North-West Mounted Police being sent west from Winnipeg in the summer of 1874. Luckily for the traders, an Indian out hunting discovered their approach and gave the alarm in time for them to cache their contraband goods. Weatherwax, however, refused to believe the news, and the police, finding liquor on his premises, confiscated his whole outfit. So ended the contraband trade in the North. All unwittingly, Joseph Kipp's invasion of the country had been the cause of the westward movement of the North-West Mounted Police. The all-powerful fur company that had urged their coming thereby lost its monopoly in western Canada. The police made known to the world the riches of the country and the railroads were built into it and the plains were overrun with settlers. In 1878 the last of the buffalo herds on the Saskatchewan plains migrated south of the line, never to return. Luckily for Kipp and Thomas, the Red Coats arrived in the country before they had stocked up for the winter trade. They forthwith aban-

doned Fort Kipp, and, returning to Montana, took up a ranch at the place that is now the town of Dupuyer. They there raised cattle for several years and did some freighting with their bull train between Fort Benton and the mountain towns. In 1877 they sold the place to James Grant and dissolved partnership, Kipp buying Fort Conrad from I. G. Baker & Co. with the intention to trade with the Indians at that point.

Buffaloes were not plentiful in the Marias country during the winter of 1877-78, and trade was light. A few small herds tarried a while in the vicinity of the Sweet Grass Hills, were chased about by the Pikuni, and the survivors drifted east toward the Bear Paws, and south across the Missouri where great numbers of their kind still roamed.

Late in the following summer the Pikuni chiefs counseled with Kipp and proposed to hunt in the Bear Paws-Missouri River country if he would camp-trade with them. He agreed to do that, and went with them in October, after loading his bull train with goods at Fort Benton. The winter was passed along the southern slopes of the Bear Paws and on the head of Crow Creek. Game was plentiful. The Indians tanned a great many robes, but Kipp did not get half of them, as his bulls became poor and were unable to make more

trips for goods. In the spring he took into Fort Benton fifteen hundred robes and about that number of small skins.

In the following summer, 1879, the Pikuni proposed to winter in the Judith country if Kipp would trade with them there. He agreed to do that, and went on ahead of them and built a substantial log post on the Judith at its junction with Warm Spring Creek. It was at this time that I joined him. Game was apparently as plentiful there as it had ever been. Elk roamed the mountain slopes in great herds; there were deer in every thicket and draw, antelopes swarmed on the plains, and the buffaloes were everywhere grazing up to the edge of the pines. There was but one settler in the whole country, "Governor" Brooks, who was running a bunch of cattle on Warm Spring Creek and was having great trouble to keep them from running off with the buffaloes.

According to agreement, the Pikuni arrived before winter set in and with them came a part of the Blood tribe from the North, and we opened trade with them for prime November robes. Small skins came in over the counter in a steady stream from sunrise to sunset every day. A camp of white skin hunters camped near us — among them Charles Carter — were killing from ten to

twenty and thirty elk and deer per man each day they hunted. We handled no liquor that winter. Above us some miles on the Judith, a man named Juneau had a small band of Red River half-breeds hunting for him and was selling whiskey. Early in the winter some of our Pikuni went up there to trade a few robes for liquor, and got into a row with the Red River hunters, young Bear Chief shooting down two of them. Thereafter the Indians kept away from that place, much to our satisfaction.

We had two exciting and anxious times during that winter. The first one occurred when John Healy, sheriff of Chouteau County, came out to arrest a Blood Indian named Turtle, for the murder of Charles Walmsley on Cutbank Creek some months before. The Bloods swore that they would not allow him to be taken from them. The Pikuni were non-committal, but inclined to side with the Bloods. Watching his chance, Healy, in his quick, intrepid way, slipped the handcuffs on the Indian and led him out into our post, where he chained him to a big log roof support. A crowd of Bloods and some young Pikuni surged in after him, and right there we all came near passing in our checks, for Healy was obdurate and would not release his man. It was Kipp who saved us and he had a strenuous time

of it. He argued and pleaded more than two hours before he finally persuaded the Indians to allow Healy to take his prisoner in to Fort Benton. Even after the last of them filed out of the room, we could not be sure that they would keep their word, and we sat up all night. We did not thank Healy for mixing us in with his official affairs, but, of course, we had to back him, come what would. We well knew that the crucial time was to come when, in the morning, Healy would lead his man out and put him in the buggy, which Undersheriff Talbot was driving. Shortly before daylight, Kipp went out in camp and aroused White Calf, Little Dog, and Running Crane, chiefs of the Pikuni, and asked them to go about among the Bloods and advise that no attempt be made to take Turtle from the sheriff. They did as requested, and between that time and seven o'clock, when Healy led Turtle out of the post and chained him beside Talbot to the buggy seat, a big and surly crowd watched the proceedings, but made no trouble. Had Turtle resisted, or had he even cried out for help, we would certainly all have been killed. The prisoner went peaceably because he believed that there was no proof that he had committed the crime. As a matter of fact, one of his companions had told the story of the killing, and when tried, Turtle was sentenced

to pass the remainder of his life in the Detroit penitentiary.

Early in March, Lieutenant Crouse arrived at the post with a company of mounted infantry from Fort Benton, and informed us that the War Department had ordered the Pikuni to be returned to their reservation. Complaint had been made, he said, that they were killing the cattle of the settlers in the Judith country.

I think that the breaking of this news to the Pikuni was to Kipp the most unpleasant task that he ever had as an interpreter. The Pikuni had killed no cattle, White Calf said. Why should his people kill bad tasting meat, he asked, when they had their choice of fat good meat — antelopes, buffaloes, elk, and deer?

Crouse replied that he did not doubt that the Great Father had been misinformed, but orders were orders; he had no choice in the matter; he just had to escort the tribe back to its agency.

For a time it looked as though we were to have war right there. The young warriors, almost to a man, proposed to resist the soldiers, regardless of consequences. They would not listen to their chiefs, who with heavy hearts were counseling submission to the officer's demand, and it was Kipp who finally brought them to their senses.

“Remember what the soldiers did to your



OLDTIME PIKUNI CHIEFS AND FRIENDS

Left to right: Running Crane, White Grass, Four Hours, Little Dog,
 Brocky, White Calf, Young Bear Chief, Little Plume
 All but White Grass are long since dead

people on the Marias," he told them. "If you don't want to lose the rest of your women, your children and little babies, then pull down your lodges and start north."

"But the soldiers are so few; we can kill them all while one counts ten," a young leader objected.

"They are as many as the grass," Kipp replied. "East, south, and west of here are forts full of soldiers, and the talking wire runs from Fort Benton to all of them. If you kill but one of these soldiers, their brothers will come hastening from every direction and shoot—shoot—shoot, until not one Pikuni man remains alive."

"Enough! You have said enough," cried Little Dog's younger brother, speaking for his crowd. "For ourselves we do not care, but we do care for our women and little ones. Because of them we will do what the young soldier chief says must be done."

And so, in direct violation of their treaty rights, began the removal of the Pikuni from rich hunting ground to their reservation, absolutely bare of game. Their horses were poor, the new grass had not started, and hundreds of them dropped along the trail. We, of course, loaded the bull train with the winter's trade, eighteen hundred robes and three thousand small skins, and jour-

neyed with them to Fort Benton. There, in the offices of I. G. Baker & Co., we learned that certain powerful interests were the cause of the removal of the Pikuni, and the Bloods with them, from the Judith country; that, for the purpose of forcing them to trade at the store at their agency, complaint had been made in Washington that they were killing the settlers' cattle in the Judith before they had even arrived there. The complainants did not profit by their scheme. The Indians arrived at the agency without any robes; there were no buffalo anywhere in that part of the country, and they soon moved eastward, and began hunting antelopes in order to keep from starving.

Practically all the buffaloes now left in Montana, and for that matter in the whole United States, were within the great triangle of plains and mountains between the Missouri and the Yellowstone, and in the Little Rockies-Bear-Paws-Milk River country north of the Missouri. After a careful reconnoissance of the country, Kipp decided that Carroll, on the south bank of the Missouri, thirty miles above the mouth of the Musselshell, would be the best location for trade, provided he could get the Indians to go down there for the winter hunt. The Pikuni refused to go, but the North Blackfeet and the Bloods

and Crees of Alberta, Canada, agreed to do so, and we left Fort Benton for Carroll, on the steamboat Red Cloud, early in July, 1880. We had on board a large stock of goods and more goods were started down overland on the bull train.

Upon arriving at Carroll, we found Augustus Tyler established there with a small outfit of trade goods, and we put up a large warehouse and store and a cook-house just below his place. The buildings were not half finished when the Indians arrived, and trade for small skins began at once. They simply poured in upon us. In all directions out from the river, the plains were covered with buffaloes, and as soon as their winter coats became prime the slaughter of them commenced. In the spring, when the fur-buyers came to inspect and bid for the winter's trade, we counted out four thousand prime robes before them, and a number of culls and pishimores. John Guwey, of Boston, bid the robes in for twenty-eight thousand dollars. I. G. Baker & Co. bought the small skins, principally antelope and deer.

Early in the ensuing summer of 1881, Louis Riel, leader of the French Cree Red River half-breeds, arrived in Carroll, and thereafter for a year made it his headquarters. It was there that he dreamed great dreams and planned the invasion of Canada by his people, which resulted in

his death. It was in vain that Kipp argued with him, explained to him that he would have not only the Canadians, but the whole English nation to fight. It didn't matter, he said, how many were the foe. His people were fighters. One half-breed, with his life experience on the plains and his unerring aim, was the equal of a hundred tenderfoot soldiers. Also, God was on his side. "I am a second David," he often declared. "As God made him a leader and savior of the Jews, so has He made me the leader of my robbed and in every way oppressed people. So it is that I shall win, even if my foes are a hundred to one against me."

Because Kipp would not aid him in his plans, he suddenly transferred his trade to Rocky Point and never paid a bill of seven hundred dollars due us. At that time the Crees and the Blackfeet and Bloods were camping far out on the plains, both north and south of the river, and he went to them all and tried to get them to make a combined attack on Carroll, and, killing us all, return to Canada with the loot obtained. None of the chiefs of the three tribes would even listen to his proposal, but a few young hare-brained Crees did answer his call, and set out to clean up the white traders. He took good care not to be with them. The Blackfeet gave us warning of their coming

and we were ready for them. Soon after dark they fired a few shots, and we fired at the flash of their rifles and they fled. One of their bullets went through the chinking of the log building, cut one end of a rope swinging cradle and let a squalling baby down to the floor with a thud, and that was all the damage they did.

During this summer we did a large trade in small skins and dried meat and pemmican. The foodstuff was sold north and east, and eventually retailed out by the traders at the Sioux agencies. One did not need a more sure sign than that, that the days of the buffalo, the days of the wild, free West were numbered.

However, we did a good trade the following winter — 1881-82 — taking in twenty-three hundred head and tail robes and about the same number of small skins. The following winter the only buffaloes left were a few small bands between the Musselshell and the Snowy Mountains, and the only hunters of them were a few English and Scotch half-breeds. The Blackfeet, the Bloods and Crees, and Riel's French Crees, had made their last buffalo hunt and gone North. When spring came, our big warehouse was a melancholy sight; in one corner of it was a little pile of three hundred robes; in another corner were four hundred antelope and deer skins. So ended the fur-

trade on the Montana plains. Said Kipp, after we inspected the meager outfit, preparatory to abandoning Carroll: "I was born in the buffalo trade. I expected to die in it. The buffaloes are gone; I don't know what to do."

What he did was to install a sawmill at Fort Conrad and drive pine timber down to it from the mountains, the resultant lumber being hauled to Fort Benton by his bull train. At the same time he bought some range cattle, which soon increased to a good-sized herd. He already had at Fort Conrad a band of several hundred horses, but these were stolen by the Crees early in March, 1883. The raid occurred at sunset, and before dark Jack Miller, Little Dog, Little Plume, Tail-Feathers-Coming-over-the-Hill, and others of the Pikuni were on the trail of the thieves. They overtook them a few miles north of the river, and a fight ensued in which three of the enemy were killed and two of the Pikuni were wounded. Miller's horse was shot from under him. The horses were mostly recovered. This was the last raid of a war party in the Marias country.

In 1884 Kipp built a ditch on Birch Creek and later sold it to the Conrad brothers. It is now called, I believe, the Conrad Canal.

In 1886 Kipp sold Fort Conrad to James McDavitt and moved to the Blackfeet Reser-

vation, where he became a stock-raiser, Indian trader, and hotel-keeper. When other traders with their Eastern method of doing business came upon the reservation he relinquished his license; he could not compete with them.

One of the acts of an early Montana territorial legislature was the unanimous passage of a bill granting Joseph Kipp the full rights of a citizen. He had not asked for it; it came to him as a surprise, and was proof enough of the high esteem all Montana had for him.

I perhaps knew Kipp better than any one else. It was inevitable that, through long years of the closest intimacy with him, I should know him well — even his inmost thoughts. He never had an Indian name, all tribes calling him, as they had his father, Kipah. In the latter years of his life his wife nicknamed him Mastwun'opachis, Raven Quiver, because of his friendship for a poor old Blood Indian of that name. He should have been named Great Heart; or, even more appropriate to his character, Kind Heart, for he was kind and generous to a fault. He could not bear to see suffering or distress of any kind, and was always quick to alleviate it so far as it was in his power to do so. Thus it was that, though during his lifetime he made great sums of money, the most of it went for charity and he died a by no means

rich man. He always had with him a number of old white, as well as Indian, pensioners, relics of the buffalo days, who but for his generosity must have ended their days in dire want. He fed and clothed them and gave them good quarters, a little money for celebrating the different holidays, and, when the time came, decently buried them. One faithful old comrade of the early days, Daniel Fitzpatrick, he sent to the Hot Springs, Arkansas, for a winter, with the hope that a lengthy sojourn there would cure his rheumatism. Dan was a lifelong sufferer from the time of the Musselshell fight in 1869, the fight in which Liver-Eating Johnson got his name. At that time Dan was shot in the leg by a Sioux bullet and the wound never entirely healed.

Joseph Kipp's love for children was one of the most marked traits of his character. In 1877 he married Double Strike Woman, a daughter of Chief Heavy Runner, killed in the Baker massacre, and to them were born Mary, James, and George Kipp, to whom he was devotedly attached. In 1879 he and his wife adopted her deceased sister's children, William and Margaret Fitzpatrick, then three and four years old, and loved them as they did their own children, and gave them every advantage within their power, educating them in Spokane. That labor of love has

been well repaid; both children have grown to be honored and respected members of their community, and in their turn are doing what they can to better the condition of the reservation people. Although without the title, Joseph Kipp was, from the buffalo days to the time of his death, the real leader, the chief, of the Pikuni. In all matters of tribal welfare the chiefs came to him for his advice and invariably followed it. It was largely through his efforts that the tribe, in 1887, got a million and a half dollars for a part of its reservation, and it was by no means his fault that that vast sum was worse than uselessly frittered away and that the winters are a time of real starvation and want to a great number of the people. Nor did he confine his interest in the Indians to matters of tribal import: he was always more than ready to assist those who were trying to follow the trail of the white man—to make progress in the ways of civilization. John Night Gun, who died recently, leaving to his family a fine herd of cattle, money in the bank, and a large life insurance, was one instance of his efforts in this line. In 1879 John was starting out with a war party on a raid against the Crows, when Kipp talked him into abandoning the outfit and becoming one of his bullwhackers. John remained with the train for some years, and Kipp

helped him build a home on Cutbank Creek and start out for himself with a few head of cattle and horses. And following his backer's advice in all things, even to putting his surplus funds into life insurance, John soon made good.

Above all things, Kipp hated the word "breed," generally prefixed by the expletive "damn," so often used by the ignorant and thoughtless when speaking of people of his mixed race. He was proud of the clean, and, I may say, noble record of his Mandan mother and ancestors, and he was equally proud of the white blood in his veins. None know better than I how hard he tried to live so as ever to have the respect and friendship of the whites, and what fits of terrible depression overcame him when he heard his kind mentioned in terms of contempt or derision. Invariably he was the superior of the user of the epithet in education and moral character, and, when I would call his attention to that fact and mention some of his many friends, men of fine standing and influence in the country, and show him how high he stood in their estimation, he would feel better. And likely as not, the very next day, or the next week, perhaps, the curser-out of the "breeds" would come to him for some favor and he would get it. I must give just one instance of the implicit faith of the people in

Kipp's honesty: For years after the coming of the North-West Mounted Police into Alberta, I. G. Baker & Co., or, in other words, the Conrad Brothers, W. G. and Charles E., each fall furnished them the funds with which to pay the Indians of that province their annuity of five dollars each. The amount was always in excess of a hundred thousand dollars, and Kipp was always the man who carried it across the several hundred miles of lonely plains between Fort Benton and Fort Macleod, Alberta.

When, a mere boy, I went to the buffalo plains of Montana, Joseph Kipp took me under his protection and taught me the ways of the frontier. He was more than a brother to me, and his mother and Crow Woman became my second mothers. He was more than a brother to me: to him I owed the happiest years of my life. When, in Arizona, news came to me of his sudden death, I was terribly shocked. Only a few days before that, I had received a cheerful letter from him, in which he said that he would, without fail, meet me at the great fair in San Francisco, in 1915. And he signed himself: "Kipah, Mastwun'opachis" (Your elder brother, Raven Quiver).

In the passing of Joseph Kipp, Montana lost a valuable citizen. He was a member of the Society of Montana Pioneers, and its oldest genuine

pioneer. When he came up the Missouri from Fort Union to Fort Benton, the latter was the only settlement of white men in the vast expanse of plains and mountains that is now the State of Montana. He lived to see it criss-crossed with railroads, fenced by immigrants, and dotted with towns and cities. And in no small measure was his part in the development of the State.

CHAPTER VI

The Quarrel,

August 16

YESTERDAY, my son and I went out with our shotguns and bagged twenty-eight ruffed grouse and blue grouse. We saw no sharptail grouse; that variety of the grouse family in Montana has been practically exterminated. This noon, the women broiled our grouse, and we all had a fine feast of them, old White Grass declaring that the birds were of about as good flavor as nitap'i wak-sin (real food; meat). We had some talk about the names for the grouse family. The ruffed grouse is called kit'sitsim (smoke-color). The blue grouse is big smoke-color, the Franklin grouse is little smoke-color, and the ptarmigan, white smoke-color. From this it may be inferred that, away back in the remote past, the Blackfeet tribes first knew the ruffed grouse, and, later, in their migrations became acquainted with these other varieties of the species.

The feast ended, we all went out to the shore of the lake, to smoke and talk, and Boy Chief said to me, as he passed me the big pipe: "You have finished setting down for your thick-writing the life story of our old friend, Raven Quiver?"

"Yes. But I am not satisfied. I feel that I have not fully told what a really great heart he was."

"None can tell that; there are not words to tell fully all that Raven Quiver was to us, and how very much we miss him!" Curly Bear exclaimed.

"Did you tell, in your writing, how very badly we feel that one of these mountains cannot be named for Raven Quiver?" Short Face asked.

"Yes; I wrote all that you said about it."

"How good he was to the poor, the old, the sick!" said Heavy Eyes.

"I can never forget his kindness to my brother, Little Dog, during the years that he lived after his terrible fall," said White Dog's woman. And then she began to cry, and we all got up and left her there on the shore, and went our various ways, I to set down this tragic story of Little Dog and his wife, of which I had intimate knowledge.

It was in the summer after the terrible starvation winter of 1883-84, a full account of which I have given in my story of the long ago, "My Life as an Indian," that the Pikuni suddenly took heart and decided to follow the white men's trail. A new and kind agent, Major Allen, had taken the place of the agent who had caused the death of more than five hundred of them from want of food that he could have obtained. There were

now ample rations for all the members of the tribe, and axes, hammers, saws, and other tools to be given out to all who would use them. Wagons, mowing-machines, rakes, and ploughs were to be given to all who would move out from the great lodge circle at the agency, and take up a ranch and build upon it a house and corral.

Among the first to take advantage of the agent's offer were young Little Dog and his young woman, Piksaki, and, piling their lodge and lodge furnishings in their new, bright-painted wagon, they left the camp circle and located in a small bottom of the Two Medicine River, about three miles above my place on the stream. At that time I was putting up a new log house, and the couple frequently came down to visit us, the man to learn how to put up a cabin with the cottonwood logs that he was cutting, the young woman to be taught house-keeping and cooking, by the neat mistress of my home, Nataki.

Autumn had come by the time the young couple completed their small cabin. Its walls were not straight, its door and windows were far from plumb, but it was, anyhow, with the cooking-stove that the agent had given them, a warm and comfortable home. The next thing in order was, of course, to furnish it. By trapping up in the foothills of the mountains, and poisoning wolves

and coyotes, enough furs were obtained during the following winter to trade for flooring, shelves, a deal table, a bedstead, curtains for the two windows, and a few porcelain dishes. During the following summer a stable and a small corral were built, but the attempt at farming was a failure, July frosts killing the acre of potatoes and turnips that they had carefully weeded and hilled up, just as white men did. They trapped again in the following winter, but fur animals were scarce; when spring came they sold their catch for twenty-five dollars, not nearly enough with which to purchase the many things they needed for their home.

Came Saturday, ration day at the agency. The young couple arose early, and while Piksaki prepared the frugal breakfast of yeast-powder biscuits, meat, and coffee, the man rounded up his band of horses, drove them into the corral, and caught two and harnessed them. For three days they had tried to decide what they would buy with the hard-earned twenty-five dollars; talked about it now while they ate, could come to no decision, and, hitching the team to the wagon, came down to our place, and asked Nataki to go with them to the agency and advise them as to the proper expenditure of the money.

Arriving at the agency, three miles over the

ridge, on Badger Creek, Little Dog held the team while the women went into the warehouse and Piksaki drew her rations of beef, flour, bacon, beans, sugar, and coffee. The three then drove over to the trader's store, tied the team to the hitching-rack, and, mounting the steps to the broad piazza of the building, paused to inspect the various goods that made up the window display. They went inside, and began eyeing the shelves and shelves of goods particularly suited to the Indians' needs, and other articles that were intended to supply the wants of the few white men on the reservation. They passed slowly from counter to counter of the long building, admiring here some brightly colored blankets, and heavy, English dress goods; there rows of tinned fruits and jams. Piksaki looked covetously at trays of rainbow-hued cut beads; said that she would like to have some strings of them; also one of the heavy double shawls; and one of the big trunks, bright with brass trimmings. The man thought that he would like to have one of the six-shooters displayed in a showcase, or else one of the saddles set upon a rail in the rear of the store. A long, long time they gazed at the various articles, discussed them, Nataki close following, listening to their talk, but saying nothing. Finally, along about noon, still undecided as to the

purchase they should make, they went out and sat upon the edge of the piazza, to rest for a time. Little Dog filled his pipe, lit it, and discussion of the momentous question was continued, and again without result.

Said Nataki to them finally: "You two, you are working hard to follow the white men's trail; you are trying hard to make your home look like a white men's home, so I advise that you buy something that you see in every white man's house, a thing that is very necessary to them."

"Yes! Yes! And what is this thing? Name it!" Little Dog cried.

"Itai'sistsikum achis (It-measures-the-day instrument)," she replied.

"Yes! Yes!" Piksaki hastily agreed.

"Of course! How wise of you to suggest it! You and Apikuni have two of them, so we should have at least one! Come, we will buy it at once, and go home!" Little Dog exclaimed.

They hurried inside and made their want known, not to one of the clerks, but to the trader himself, Raven Quiver, Joseph Kipp. He told me afterward that he had to bite his lips to keep from smiling at their choice. There were a dozen of them in stock, ranging in kind from the small round nickel one-day clocks to gilded, imitation marble ones that struck the hours and half-hours

on clear, deep-toned gongs. The price of the former was three dollars; of the latter, twenty dollars. Long they looked at them, and at last:

"We want the best one of them," said Little Dog.

"Yes. The best, of course. I love this one; the noise it makes is so clear and soft, and — sad," Piksaki said.

"Anything that is sad is unlucky — still, this is of white men's make, and so not likely to affect us. Raven Quiver, we will take it," the man decided, and laid twenty silver dollars upon the counter.

Kipp carefully instructed them how to wind the clock, and then set the hands at seven. "When you arrive home," he said, "you will place the clock where it will sit level, as it now does. Then, when Sun goes down behind the mountains, you will take this stretching band off the swinging thing and start it going. This mark is one, this two, this three, and so around to the top, which is twelve. When the two markers come together there, it is the middle of the night, or the middle of the day. Sun now disappears when it is seven. I have fully wound both winds. On next ration day, and not before then, nor later, you will wind them. Wind them every ration day; that is all you have to do."

"We have made a very useful purchase, and

still have five dollars. Take them, my woman, and buy what you will for yourself," said Little Dog, and handed Piksaki the shining pieces.

"Take our purchase, then, and go out to the wagon and wait for us; you are not to see me spend the five," she replied.

And when he had gone out with the clock, she said to Nataki: "Think quickly, tell me what to buy that will most please him."

The money went for a pair of high-heeled, red-topped cowboy boots, cramping, painful foot-gear for one who had all his life worn light and comfortable moccasins. But as Piksaki said: "We have taken the trail of the whites, so we must, as nearly as we can, dress as they do."

Arrived at their cabin, that evening, the happy pair placed the clock upon a shelf, and at the proper time set the pendulum swinging. Then they had supper, and, while eating, said to one another, again and again, that they had been very wise in buying the clock; that it gave their cabin the complete appearance of a white's home; that it was pleasant to hear its continuous ticking, and its sweet, sad striking of the hours.

"Indeed," Little Dog remarked, as at last they blew out the light and lay down — "Indeed, the white men's god is a very wonderful man! He gives them the power to make anything that they

want; this, for instance, that marks the coming and the passing of our own god, Sun."

"Yes, and of our night gods, too."

"True. I hadn't thought of that. But maybe it doesn't. We must see about that; when it strikes midnight, we will go out and look at the Seven Persons."

Piksaki didn't sleep well. She often awoke, struck a match and looked at the clock hands, and at last, when they were about to come together at the top of the dial, she lit the candle, aroused her hard-sleeping man, and together they listened to the striking of the twelve silvery notes. They then got up and went out and looked up into the northern sky: sure enough, the Seven Persons — the Pleiades — had swung around to their midnight position.

"Good!" Little Dog exclaimed. "Our measures-the-day instrument is no liar; it tells the truth in the night, as well as in the day!"

"I am glad that we have it, and now we must have one more thing from the trader's store, to make ours completely like a white men's home: we must have a sewing instrument, just like the one Apikuni gave to Nataki. They are very beautiful; they make such a nice noise when their wheels go round, and the needled bill pecks down into cloth, oh, so much faster than one can sew by hand," said Piksaki.

“We will have one, even though it takes me three winters to catch furs with which to buy it,” the man replied. And that made her so happy that, as she afterward told Nataki, she then and there kissed her mate again and again, and told him that he was the kindest, best man who ever lived.

News of the couple's purchase spread, and from up and down the Two Medicine, and from Cutbank River to the north, came friends and relatives, curious to see a clock in a Pikuni home. They all agreed that it gave the cabin an improved appearance. There began a run upon the trader's stock of clocks, and in three days' time he sold them all, and sent a rush order to St. Paul for more.

Surmising that the young couple's stock of food would be exhausted by so many visitors to their little home, Nataki, on Thursday, got together some groceries and a side of ribs of a beef that I had killed, and had me drive her up there. They accepted the things gratefully, and there were tears in Piksaki's eyes, I believe, as she turned from putting the things away and embraced her friend. We admired the clock, of course, and said that it was a better one than we had. And so it was.

Said Nataki to me as we were driving home:

"I wish that all my people were like the friends that we have just left. Hard-working, sober, with kind and loving hearts, they are sure to be prosperous and happy, and have plenty to sustain them in their old age."

Came ration day, Saturday, and Piksaki went to the agency for her share of the food, while her man worked about the home. Then, in the evening, as they were eating supper, she suddenly exclaimed: "Oh, I nearly forgot it: this is the day that we wind our measures-the-day instrument!"

"So it is! How smart of you to remember it! Well, we'll do it pretty soon," he replied.

She washed the dishes while he smoked a pipe, and he then, as soon as the dishes were put away, mounted a chair, opened the round glass door of the clock, and set the key upon the right-hand winding pivot, the one that coiled the time spring. He paused.

"Let me remember," he said. "Oh, yes. Raven Quiver said to turn it this way," and he made left-to-right circles in the air with extended forefinger.

"Oh, no! No!" Piksaki cried. "It is just the other way that he said to turn it: from right to left!"

"No. He didn't!"

"Yes, he did!"

"But I tell you he didn't!" Little Dog roared. "I know what he said, of course I know. I am a man; men remember things; women don't!"

Both were now furiously angry. This was their first quarrel; never before had they even mildly contradicted one another.

Piksaki lost all control of herself, and, "Dog-face!" she cried — a terrible name for a woman to call her man; the very worst epithet in the Black-feet language.

"Dog-face yourself!" the man retorted; and then, "Just to prove to you that you are wrong, I will turn this thing the way that you say it should go."

He gave the key a sudden vicious twist, something snapped, harshly whirled, the big steel spring uncoiled, and the clock stopped ticking. He turned the key to the left, to the right, and it met with no resistance. He drew it from the pivot and dashed it down upon the floor. "There!" he cried, angrily, triumphantly. "There! Just see what you have done! It is broken, its intestines are all torn to pieces; our money, our hard-earned money, has been wasted through your fault!" And with that he stepped down and slumped into the chair.

Piksaki, drawing her blanket over her head, ran out the door and away from the cabin, and

sat down upon the ground and began to wail, calling over and over the name of her dead mother, begging her shadow mother to witness her daughter's distress. Of all mournful sounds in this world, there are none so mournful as the wailings of the women of the Blackfeet tribes. They are the supreme expression of misery and despair. Far, far into the night the young woman remained there, and all anger went from her heart and she blamed herself for the quarrel; she, herself, had first used that vile epithet, "dog-face." She went into the cabin and timidly queried, "My man, are you asleep?" She heard him move restlessly upon the bed, knew that he had heard her; he made no reply; she laid herself down upon the floor, and slept fitfully until morning. She then got up and set about preparing the morning meal. Little Dog also got up; went to the river and bathed; came back, and ate in silence. Neither did she speak; she had much pride. She said to herself that he must make the first overture for peace.

Days passed. Neither spoke. The man went and came about his work, ate the food that the woman three times a day prepared for him, and at night slept alone. Nataki visited them, and came home and told me that something was wrong with the young couple; that they would

not speak to each other, nor tell her what was the trouble between them. She went again, found Piksaki alone, and, after much questioning of her, she broke down and told all about the wrecking of the clock and the ensuing quarrel. "And," Piksaki concluded, "I feel that I cannot bear this terrible estrangement another day: because of it my heart is dying."

Nataki soothed her, advised her: "Throw away your pride and ask him to forgive the name you called him," she said. "I am sure that he feels as badly as you do, and wants to make up."

"I must do it! I will do it, this very night!" she answered; and when Nataki left her she seemed to be more cheerful.

That evening, when the sun was near setting, Little Dog went to the top of a cliff rimming the north side of the bottom, to sit and look out over the country, as had been the custom of the Pikuni from time immemorial. The buffaloes were exterminated, war parties no longer roamed the plains, but still, at evening, they went to the nearest high places to look out, and meditate, and offer prayers to the vanishing god of day. After Nataki had left her, Piksaki followed her man up there, climbed the steep slope to the west of the cliff, and then went out upon it and seated herself behind the man, who was sitting upon its very

edge. He did not turn to look at her, seemed to be unaware that she had come.

"My man, my dear man, forgive me the bad name that I called you," she begged.

And got no answer.

"My man!" she cried, "Do forgive me, love me again! I will be good, oh, so good to you."

And still he did not reply.

She had carried up a moccasin top that she was beading; her sinew thread, needle, and pair of scissors.

"You will not forgive me? Then with these scissors will I kill myself!" she cried.

Little Dog looked back, saw her about to pierce her throat with one of the scissors blades: "I will not live to see you do it!" he exclaimed, and dropped from the cliff edge.

Shrieking with horror, Piksaki ran back down the trail, and then to the foot of the high cliff, where her man lay, apparently dead, and in some way she was suddenly imbued with sufficient strength to lift him and carry him to the cabin and lay him upon the bed. There he became conscious, raised his arms and embraced and kissed her.

"Oh, why did you do it?" she asked.

"I could not bear to see you kill yourself, so I jumped off, also to die, so that our shadows would

together take the trail to the Sand Hills," he replied.

He tried to get up, but could not move his legs: from his waist down he was paralyzed. Though he lived for some years, he never walked again. And so long as he lived, Piksaki patiently, lovingly nursed him, and Raven Quiver, and others, saw to it that he lacked for none of the little comforts that they were able to provide for him.

Haiya!

CHAPTER VII

Charles Rivois's Tale of Hardship

August 19

YESTERDAY we had some talk about Charles Rivois, or Utse'nakwan (Gros Ventre Man), as was his Pikuni name.

I became well acquainted with Rivois when, in the winter of 1879-80, he came with the Pikuni to winter on the Judith River, where Joseph Kipp and I had built a trading post for the accommodation of the tribe. Rivois was then a very old man, but still quite active, and during the winter he traded in a number of skins of beavers and other animals that he had trapped or shot. After that winter, I did not meet him again until 1885, when his children and grandchildren, several families of them, took up ranches near mine, on the Two Medicine River, and he and his old Pikuni wife came to live with them. I then often went to sit with him, and during long winter evenings got from him many a tale of his adventures in the Upper Missouri country in early days. He was then totally blind, but still had good health and strength, and he often in fits of wild rage cursed the cause of his affliction, gods, devils, enemy

ghosts, or whoever they were that had wickedly blinded him and put an end to his activities.

I well remember one little experience that Rivois had on the Two Medicine which made him very happy. I was sitting with him, one afternoon in early spring, when his great-grandson, a boy of seven, came running in to him, and cried: "Utse'nakwan! Nikaw'qunip ksistukiks!" (Gros Ventre Man! I have discovered beavers!)

"Where? Where?" the old man asked, in the same language; English was rarely spoken in that house.

"Down the river a little way. They are cutting willows, dragging them down the bank into the water, and setting them in line across to the other shore."

"Ha! Going to build a dam there. How deep is the water where they drag the willows into it?"

"Not deep; maybe up to your knees; no more than that."

"Good! Hurry, boy, bring a trap and ring stake, my cane, and we will go down there."

"You are not going to try to trap the beavers?" I asked.

"But of course! The boy shall be my eyes. Come with us and you will see what I can do!"

The boy brought a trap, and, fingering it and its chain and finding both in good order, he placed

the trap upon the floor, stepped upon its powerful springs and set it, and then called for the trap stake, a willow about six feet long, its butt sharpened, its branches lopped so as to leave slanting projections of about an inch, except at the tip, where was a fork, much wider than the diameter of the ring of the trap chain. Carrying these, and leading the old man by holding the end of his cane, the boy guided us to a patch of willows at the lower end of the bottom, and out to the bank of the river at a point about fifteen feet below the beaver workings. There the old man sat down and took off shoes and socks and rolled up his trousers, the boy, meantime, explaining the location of the cutting place, and the trail, the steep smooth wet slide down the steep bank to the water. Below us a little way was the beginning of the proposed dam, twenty-five or thirty willows laid in a row from shore to shore. Rivois said that the beavers that had placed them were a young, newly mated pair, and foolish; a dam could not be built there; the young couple were so full of life and energy that they had to do something besides eating, and so were playing at dam-building. If not trapped, they would sooner or later join a colony of their kind, and be instructed in the art of dam-building and lodge-building by wise old members of it.

Again the old man took up his trap and trap stake, and the boy led him down the bank and into the water, and then up to the beaver slide, and said: "Here it is, the place where they come down into the water with their willow cuttings."

"Good. Now take my trap and stake, and place my hand upon the foot of the slide," said the old man. Having located it, he felt its smooth surface, plunged his hands into the water, and ascertained its depth close to shore, found it too deep for his purpose, and with handfuls of stiff mud built a smooth platform six inches below the surface, and right in front of the slide, and set the trap upon it. He then took the willow stake from the boy, ran the butt of it through the ring of the trap chain, and then, below the trap — that is, downstream from it and under the water — pushed the sharpened butt firmly into the bank. He and the boy then dashed water upon the slide, to wash away the scent of his hands, and the work was done. Springing the trap and fast to it by a foot, the beaver would plunge away from shore, the ring of the trap chain would slide out along the pole to its fork, but, owing to the projecting branch stubs, it could not slide back, and so, unable to return to shore, the beaver would soon be drawn down by the heavy trap and drown.

On the following morning, when I rode up to the old man's cabin, I found him slowly and expertly skinning a beaver; and very greasy he was and very happy.

"You were successful," I said.

"Yes, of course. This that I am skinning is the he one; to-night, I shall catch his woman," he replied.

And, sure enough, he did. But they were the last beavers that he caught. He died in the summer of 1899, in his ninety-sixth year, and we laid him to rest close to the grave of his old friend, Hugh Monroe (Rising Wolf), with whom he had so often roamed these plains and mountains.

Charles Rivois's parents, French creoles, moved from New Orleans to St. Louis in 1798 or '99, and there he was born in 1803. In 1825 he became an *engagé* of the American Fur Company, and in 1828 was one of the large party of men that Kenneth Mackenzie, head of the Company on the Upper Missouri, sent to the mouth of the Yellowstone to build Fort Floyd, later named Fort Union. In 1831 he went with James Kipp and his hardy *voyageurs* to the mouth of the Marias River, and helped build Fort Piegan, which was abandoned, and then burned by the Indians, in the following year. It was at Fort Piegan that he took to himself a Gros Ventre woman, and so was named by the Blackfeet tribes, Utse'nakwan

(Gros Ventre Man). When she died in the eighteen-fifties, he married a woman of the Pikuni tribe of the Blackfeet Confederacy, with whom he lived to the time of his death.

During my long acquaintance with Charles Rivois, he told me many tales of his adventures, and from an old notebook I resurrect the following, his story of the greatest hardship that he ever experienced:

"In 1832, upon my return with James Kipp and his men to Fort Union," he began, "Kenneth Mackenzie promised the Crow Indians that he would build a post up in their own country, for their convenience, and appointed Samuel Tulloch, a man in whom he had great trust, to do it. I was one of the men that Tulloch chose to go with him. We left Fort Union in July, a large party of us, with three boats loaded with supplies and an overland outfit of horses, and went up the Yellowstone to the mouth of the Bighorn River. Not finding there a good place for a fort, we dropped back down the Yellowstone a distance of about three miles, and in a big bottom on the south side of it, where there was plenty of timber, we built Fort Cass, or, as many of us called it, Tulloch's Fort. We completed it in October, and then I returned to Fort Union with five of the men who had helped in the work.

“In the fall of the next year, Mr. Mackenzie sent for me one day, and said that he wanted me to take ten pack-horse loads of powder and ball and other goods to Fort Cass, and that I could select four of the *engagés* to go with me. I chose Charles Choquet, Baptiste Rondin, Antoine Chabernau, and Louis Niquette, this last one because we had been boys together in St. Louis. He had only that summer become an *engagé* of the Company. We swam our pack-horses and saddle-horses across the Missouri, in front of the fort, ferried our outfit over, and, loading up, struck off straight across the plains to Fort Cass, a distance of about one hundred and forty miles. The pack-horses were very heavily loaded, so we traveled slowly, not more than twenty miles a day. It was early in November, and ice froze over the water-holes every night. All went well with us and we were very happy, singing all day long the songs of the *voyageur*. When night came, we made camp, broiled fat ribs and tongues of buffaloes, and boiled tea. We joked and laughed, told stories, went early to sleep. We kept no night watch, for we were in the country of the Crows, and they had made a treaty of peace with Mr. Mackenzie, and had promised him that they would kill none of his men.

“It was at daylight of our fifth day out that I

suddenly awoke with the feeling that we were not alone. I opened my eyes and saw many Crow Indians standing at the foot of our beds. I glanced the other way; Crows were there also. Crows surrounded us — several hundred of them — on all sides. I roused my comrades, and they sat up, rubbing their eyes. Yet, like me, they were not afraid, for had we not a treaty with the Crows?

“But I saw no smile on any Indian face; instead, only scowls. Their leader made signs to us, saying to us in the sign language: ‘Get up, white men, and hand us your guns, your pistols, your knives.’

“We obeyed. What could five men do against two hundred? They swarmed round us, jostled and pushed us about as they seized our weapons. I signed to their chief: ‘You shouldn’t do this. You Crows made peace with our chief, in the big house where the two rivers meet; you promised to be friendly to us.’

“He laughed. He signed to me: ‘You are crazy. We are not Crows; we are Blackfeet. We hate white men.’ But we knew that they were Crows. They wore their hair Crow fashion, roached above the forehead, the rest in long braids, and the quill embroidery of their leather pouches and their moccasins was done in designs that were peculiar

to that tribe. They were careful, too, not to speak so that we could hear them.

“No sooner had they taken our weapons than they roughly stripped us of our clothing, made us naked as when we were born, and, as we stood there, shivering in the cold morning, the chief signed to us: ‘Go, now, white dogs, back whence you came, and never again set foot in this our Blackfeet country.’

“‘Allow us, clotheless, to go on south to our near house, and obtain clothing,’ I pleaded.

“‘No! Return to your North Big-House, or die upon the trail,’ he signed and struck me across my shoulders with his three-thonged whip. And at that, his men crowded around and began whipping us, dragging and pushing us northward from our camping-place. That they did for as much as a hundred paces, and suddenly turned and went back to divide amongst themselves our horses, packs of trade goods, everything that was there at our camp. Hai! But we were bruised and cut and bloody, and shivering with the cold of the morning. We ran, in order to get warm. But not far; our feet were tender; the rough gravel of the plain hurt them; we were obliged to walk. We left the trail and went east until we struck the Yellowstone, and followed it down, walking in the dusty buffalo trails in its high-grassed and

timbered bottoms. We were fairly warm in the clear sunshine. Water there was in plenty, but we became very hungry, and there was nothing to eat except shrunken and dry rosebrush berries, and they were few; the plains grouse had just about cleaned up the crop of them.

"Night came. All day long we had dreaded it, and now it was upon us. We tried to light a fire by rubbing dry sticks together, by using one of them as a drill twirled between the hands, but the wood didn't even get hot. At last we burrowed into the sand of the river shore, and for a time we slept. Then the sand lost its heat; we began to tremble from cold. One by one we rose and rubbed our sore limbs, making our bruises and cuts bleed again. It was past midnight when a piece of the moon began to shine, and in its dim light we went on, here following the sandy shore, there a trail in the timber. My old playmate's courage broke; he wept. It was terrible to hear him.

"'Louis! Louis! Cheer up, my friend; all will be well,' I kept saying to him, but still he wept; and Chabernau, that big man, black-eyed, black-haired, bull-muscled, tried to put spirit in him by calling him 'baby.' Oh, it was terrible, that long, long night.

"That was not a bullberry year, but the next

afternoon we found a half-dozen of the trees with some fruit upon them. The sight cheered us. We ran to them, began eating the berries, sweetened by the frost of the November nights. How good they tasted! The trees stood in a patch of high rosebrush cut by game trails. We were gathered, all of us, around the tree that had the most berries. We soon stripped it, and started for the next one, when a big grizzly bear rose up in front of us, and, after sniffing the air, charged on us. We fled, one this way, one that way, running, leaping with all our poor strength. I heard a loud cry, and, looking back, saw Louis spring off the high cutbank into the river. The bear stopped at the edge of it and looked curiously down. We all saw the great beast there — as big as a buffalo he was — and, running, we made a great circle around him and in to the river shore. A little way out, Louis was giving a few feeble strokes, making no headway, and Rondin swam out and seized him just as he was going down, and brought him to land. We rolled him, emptied the water out of him, chafed his numb limbs, and after a time he was able to get up and walk. We went on, leaving the big grizzly in possession of the berry trees.

“Looking back at it afterward, I never could understand how we ever succeeded in reaching the Missouri, half-frozen, naked, bruised and cut

and starved, but reach it we did on the fifth day, and near sundown. That morning, Louis had gone crazy, and we, very near that point, had led him, pushed him, coaxed him along all through the day. We came to the shore of the river, very wide there in front of the fort. A strong west wind was blowing, so we could not shout loud enough to be heard. But, anyhow, we shouted and shouted, and ran up and down the bank, waving our arms; and the answer that we got was a shot from the watch in the front bastion, who thought we were enemies, defying him.

“At that, both Choquet and Rondin broke down and wept, and I was very near it. Our nerve was gone. We were as little children, save Louis, crazy, and Chabernau, mad with anger at the watchman. We took to the brush, taking poor Louis with us, but Chabernau remained on the shore, cursing the man in the bastion, shaking his fists at him.

“But the shot had aroused the people in the fort; they came swarming out of it and stood, watching Chabernau rage. Mr. Mackenzie, though, went up into the bastion with his long, powerful telescope, and, leveling it, recognized Chabernau in the naked man on the shore. And at that, men came running to the river. Springing into a boat, they crossed and took us in and

brought us to the other shore, where our women were waiting with blankets to cover our nakedness and help us into the fort. Ah, how good it was to sit before a fire once more, and eat hot things! And how we slept, all of that night and far into the next day. When I awoke, I asked of Louis, and learned that the craziness had gone from him, and he was eating broiled buffalo tongue. As soon as we were up, Mr. Mackenzie had us come to his office and tell him all about our terrible experience. My! My! How he did rage at the Crows, and swear that he would make them pay for what they had done to us.

"But of course he never did. After he had calmed down, he decided that, for the best interest of the trade, particularly at Fort Cass, we should never tell the Crows that we knew they, and not a war party of Blackfeet, had set us afoot, stripped us of our all, and beaten us with their whips."

CHAPTER VIII

The Bad-Signs War Trail

August 23

YESTERDAY we were visited by Mr. Julian Salomon, a high executive of the Boy Scouts of America. He said he had heard that we were having some interesting talks about our adventures away back in the buffalo days, and asked that we tell him some stories of war that he could pass on to the youths of his organization. So, all through the afternoon and far into the night, first out on the shore of the shimmering lake, and then in Curly Bear's lodge, our old men one after another told about their raids against enemy tribes, and counted their *coups*. It was all of eleven o'clock when, knocking the ashes from his big pipe, Curly Bear declared the sitting ended. Then, as he was leaving, Mr. Salomon told us that this had been his red-letter day of the fifty days that he had passed in the Park and on the Blackfeet Reservation. And, as I went with him out to his picketed saddle-horse, he said that, of all the stories that had been told, he liked best old White Grass's tale, as it revealed so plainly the Indian mind. I, too, liked the story, so here it is, set down as well

as I can turn Pikuni into English, no easy task, I assure you.

"As I understand them, the whites in one way, and one way only, are poorer than we poor people of the plains: they never have visions in their sleep, and signs of one kind and another as they go about, to warn them of danger close ahead," the old man began.

"Very long ago, in the time of my youth — I had just taken a woman, set up a lodge with her — the Pikuni moved from the Cypress Hills, where we all had wintered, and, after some days of travel, made camp on Bear River, in the big timbered bottom below the Medicine Rock.¹

"A few days after we had gone into camp there, Small Robe, a man of about fifty winters, began thinking of going to war. He thought about it, talked about it; but at night in his lodge, when sleeping, he could get no vision of the future and what he might expect of good or bad. So, one evening, he went up to the sacred rock, there to sleep and perhaps get a vision. That rock, you know, has life. It moves. When our far-back fathers first saw it, the top of the long slope down to the river bottom was its resting-place. When they again came there, they found that it had moved down the slope a little way, so they knew

¹ The second bottom above the Marias River railway bridge.

that Sun loved it, and had given it some of his power. They gave the rock presents of the things that they had with them, and prayed it to give them long life, success in all their affairs. Since that far-away time, even to this day, the rock has kept moving little by little down the slope, and never have any of the Pikuni passed it without making it a present of some kind and praying to it.

"There, beside the rock, in his sleep, Small Robe at last had a vision. In the morning, he returned to camp and said that he had in his sleep seen scalped enemies, and he believed that that was a sign that he should organize a party to go with him on a raid. He intended to go against the tribes on the other side of the Backbone-of-the-World, and wanted to know who would follow him.

"From this camp, and from earlier camps, many of the Pikuni had made up parties and set off to the east and to the south, to raid enemy tribes, so there were but few left who could or would join Small Robe's party. Only eleven men offered to go with him, and of these I, just a youth, was one. We made our preparations for the long trail: we made sacrifices to Sun, praying him to protect us from all dangers, and give us good success. An old Sun priest, Spotted Bear, had us all gather in a sweat lodge, where, sweat-

ing freely, we smoked with him his sacred pipe while he prayed for us. We then ran from the lodge and plunged into the cold water of the river, put on our clothes, and went to Small Robe's lodge, where we feasted and smoked and sang war songs far into the night. When the last song was sung, Small Robe told us to go to our lodges and sleep until morning, when we would take the trail to the west. I went home and found my woman crying, and she told me that I was not doing right by her; we were but newly paired, and here I was, no doubt already tired of her; going off to war so soon proved that, and she was sure that she would never see me again.

“‘We have but five horses, and this poor little lodge,’ I answered. ‘Now, I leave it to you to decide this: shall I remain here, ever by your side, with the result that we shall always be poor, that I shall be called a lazy coward, afraid to go out and fight the enemy, or shall I try to obtain a great band of horses, try to count many *coups* on the enemy, so that I may be respected by our people?’

“‘I don’t care whether we are poor or rich, but I do want you to become a great chief. Go. Go on your war trail. When Sun appears, I shall say something to him, something for your safety,’ she replied.

"At break of day, we ate and drank. Sun came in sight in the blue, and my woman went outside, and, calling to all people to listen, she looked straight at Sun and said to him, that, if he would help me to return safely to her, she, a pure woman as he well knew, would build a sacred lodge for him, in the coming Berries Ripe moon . . ."

The old man's voice broke; he paused and wiped his eyes; then said so low that we could barely hear him: "Yes, there she stood in her youth, her beautiful youth; there, in the presence of the people, she made her vow to Sun for me! Oh, I was proud of her! Glad, glad, that she was my woman!

"Well, we gathered before Small Robe's lodge, the eleven of us, and he came out, handed me the sacred roll of his Beaver Medicine pipe to carry for him, and we left the great camp and traveled up the river until night, when we made camp in a big grove of timber.

"On the following day, late in the afternoon, after we had left the head of Bear River and were traveling up its Two Medicine Lodges fork, Small Robe said to us that we must kill some meat, and so save for a time of need the dry meat and the pemmican that our women had put in our war sacks. There was then a small band of buffaloes grazing just ahead of us, and, sneaking

on through the willows along the shore of the river, Last Wolf, a good hunter, shot a big bull and it fell. We all ran to it, turned it upon its belly, turning its head in beside its body, to hold it in position, and then Small Robe took out his knife, slit the hide of the bull along the line of its back from head to tail, and some of us on one side of the animal and some on the other side, we began skinning the hide down toward the belly. And then, suddenly, that bull that we had thought dead came to life: it sprang to its feet, knocking two men down, and ran off, its bloody skin flapping upon each side of its body at every jump. It was a strange sight, a terrible sight. We just stood and stared at the bull as it ran off up the slope of the narrow valley. It disappeared over the rim of the plain, and when it had gone, right there we sat down, and wild-eyed looked at one another, and for a long time none spoke. Finally, one of our number said:

“‘This that has happened is a sign of bad luck; a sign that danger is somewhere ahead of us, close ahead, perhaps.’

“‘Yes,’ said another, ‘I remember hearing my grandfather tell of a bull, that a long-ago war party killed, that came to life just as this one did, but, instead of paying any attention to it, though they knew it was a warning of bad luck ahead, the

party went on, and were ambushed by the enemy and were most of them killed. I say that we heed this warning, and turn about and go straight home.'

"But Small Robe made strong objection to turning back: 'My father, a great warrior, as you all know, always told me that a happening of this kind was a sign of good luck, a sign of the taking of many enemy scalps and many enemy horses, so we must go on. Even though you all leave me here, I shall go on and across the mountains into the enemy country,' he said.

"Following that, there was much talk. Some of the party were for turning back, but the most of them were for going on, and at last all agreed that they would follow their leader. We knew that Small Robe was a very wise warrior; we felt that he would do all that he could to keep us from getting into trouble.

"On the day after this strange occurrence, as we were about to cut across a big bend of the river, we saw ahead of us, as we rose to the rim of the plain, an object that had the appearance of a man. We had no more than glimpsed it than we dodged back down the slope a little way and stopped, and one man said that we had turned back for nothing; he was sure that the object out on the plain was not a man; it was too small to be

a man, and no lone child could possibly be out there.

"Said Small Robe, 'I think just as you do about it, but I turned back with you all, for one cannot be too cautious, too suspicious of anything that has the least appearance of the enemy. We will now sneak back up the slope, and, rising no higher than the level of the plain, our faces screened by the sagebrush, we will see just what is out there.'

"So, back we went up the slope, and soon discovered that it was not a man that we had seen, but a rock that had the shape of a man, or, rather, the shape of a boy of about six or seven winters. We went out to it, gathered around it, and one said: 'This is another strange occurrence, our sighting this boy-shaped rock and sneaking back from it. I believe it a sign of bad luck for us, if we go on, and I believe that the coming to life of the buffalo bull was the same kind of sign. I propose that we turn and go home.'

"None agreed with this man's proposal; all laughed and said that they would go on, and he then said that he would, too, but he knew that danger was close ahead. Then, before Small Robe led off, one of the party, named Butchers-with-his-Head-Down, took off a mink skin that he had tied to his hair, laid it upon the strange-

shaped rock, and prayed it to give him and all the party good success against the enemy. Another, Facing West, then wrapped the rock with an extra blanket that he had, and also prayed to it. We were then all about to start on when another one, named Shoots Close, cried loudly: 'Wait. Wait for me until I give it something.' He took up a big stone and threw it at the rock boy-figure, broke its leg, and it fell over and lay flat upon the ground. At that, Butchers-with-his-Head-Down got very angry, scolded Shoots Close, and told him to go back and set up the figure as well as he could. Shoots Close refused to do it; so he went back and propped the figure up with stones, and again prayed to it for help.

"Near sunset of that day, we killed a deer, and, taking the greater part of its meat, went into camp where Badger Creek runs into Two Medicine Lodges River. I was Small Robe's helper, carrier of his sacred pipe, and, when we went into the timber, he had me make a couch for him off to one side, where he could smoke his pipe and think and pray, and try to get a vision, undisturbed by the talk and movements of the others. I built a small fire in front of the couch, broiled some meat before it for the chief, brought water for him, and he then told me to leave him and say to the others that none should disturb

him until morning, unless some kind of danger threatened us.

"The night passed quietly. At daylight, Small Robe came and awoke us and said that we should build a fire and cook and eat, and be ready to start on westward as soon as possible. He complained that he had been unable to get a vision while he slept.

"‘Well, if you failed to get a vision, I didn’t,’ Butchers-with-his-Head-Down told him. ‘I saw many warriors chasing a few, who seemed to be us, and then I awoke. Then, when I slept again, I saw, as though I were a long way from them, men stretched out upon the plain, all of them stripped of their clothing and scalped. I take it that that is a bad sign; it makes the third bad sign for us, and I propose that, right here, we turn about and go home.’

"‘Yes. Let us do that,’ said Facing West.

"‘Your vision means success for us, and I can prove it,’ Small Robe cried. ‘My father had just such a vision of men lying dead and scalped, and he led his party on to great killings of the enemy and taking of many enemy horses.’

"There followed much talk about the signs that we had had, but the end of it was that we all agreed to go on. We hurriedly cooked and ate some meat, and went on up the river, traveled all

day, and made camp below here, where White-Tail Creek runs into this river. There I again made a couch for Small Robe, where he could rest undisturbed and smoke his sacred pipe and pray, but, after he finished eating, he came over to our fire and said that he would sit with us for a time. We again began talking about the three signs that we had had — the bull that came to life and ran away, partly skinned; the rock figure of a person that we had mistaken for an enemy; Butchers-with-his-Head-Down's vision of men dead and scalped; and while some argued that they were encouraging signs, others said that they were warnings of something terrible to happen to us should we go farther into the west. Then, suddenly, all talking ceased; we held our breath and listened: far off from us some one was crying, as though mourning for the dead. We could barely hear the sad crying; it ceased; we waited and waited for it to come again to our ears, but it was not repeated. At last Butchers-with-his-Head-Down broke the long silence. Said he, 'There! That completes the number of warnings to us! That is the fourth one! Four, the sacred number! It is now plain enough that we must give up this war trail and return to our people on Bear River.'

"I don't believe that it was a person who

made that faint crying we heard,' said Small Robe. 'It was a very far-off wolf or coyote; they sometimes do make almost human cries. In that crying I can find no warning that we should take our back trail, give up our quest of the enemy. You all know that I am not one to take unnecessary risks. I want you all to say, right now, that you will go on, that you will follow me across the mountains into the enemy country.'

"In the talk that followed the chief's request, all but Butchers-with-his-Head-Down and Facing West soon agreed to do as Small Robe asked; they two argued and argued against going on, but could get not one of the others to agree with them, so, at last, they gave in, and said that they, too, would go on, though they knew that we were going straight into terrible danger.

"On the following morning, I was first to awake and get up, and, as I went here and there in the timber, gathering dry branches for a fire, Facing West came out to help me. He was muttering to himself, and I asked what troubled him. He replied that he had lost faith in Small Robe. He said, angrily, that the chief knew very well that the four signs that we had had were warnings to us to turn back, but he was ashamed to do that, and so was bound to lead us on, to our end somewhere in the west. I made no reply to

that. I was so young, I had had so little experience, that I felt the one thing for me to do was to keep my mouth shut and obey Small Robe in everything that he told me to do.

"We ate our early morning meal, took up our things and went on, leaving the partly canyoned river, and struck out over the plain toward Willow Creek, Small Robe saying that we would follow it to its head, and then go over the narrow ridge and make camp at the foot of this lake. From here, it was his intention to strike through the timber to the middle fork of this river, and follow the trail running up it to its head, and thence through the low pass in the mountains down into the country of the enemy tribes.

"Sun was about halfway up to the center of the blue and we were in sight of Willow Creek, when Small Robe missed his little sack of paints, remembered that he had left it at the head of the couch of grass that I had made for him, and told me to go back for it. I didn't want to go back, and much less did I want to go alone, but I could not say that I was afraid and ask for one or two of our number to go back with me. I was very angry at Small Robe for ordering me to do this, but I said nothing to him, just stared at him, and then turned and back-trailed as fast as I could walk. Just once, on top of a little ridge in the

plain, I paused and looked back at Small Robe, leading the others, and felt more than ever angry at him, at this I had to do because of his carelessness. I had forgotten that I still carried his sacred Beaver Medicine pipe roll, but now the weight of it upon my back made me realize that I had it, and that it was a good protector against the dangers that might beset me. I went on, little thinking that I was soon to feel very sorry that I had been angry at our chief.

“After I left the little party and as they were nearing Willow Creek, they came upon the remains of a buffalo that had recently been killed. Nearly all of its meat had been cut from the bones and carried away by a large party of men, as was proved by the signs around the kill, the grass all flattened by the tread of many moccasined feet; there were, too, the footprints of one horse. It was, of course, a war party that had been there, and, having hurriedly examined the signs, Small Robe said to his followers: ‘We will go on to the creek as fast as we can, and there decide what is best to do to avoid the enemy.’

“They ran all the way to the creek, and, after drinking, sat in a row on top of its bank and in the edge of a scattering, new growth of willows. They had no more than sat down, when, on the slope of the valley straight across from them, a lone

rider suddenly appeared, and they remained motionless, watching him. He dismounted, rubbed a foreleg of his horse and then the other foreleg. He walked around and around the horse as it grazed, stopping to look down the valley, and up it, and to the north, but never, apparently, even once in their direction. After remaining there for some time, he got upon his horse and rode up the slope, and then out upon the plain and out of their sight. As soon as he was gone, they began talking about him, and all but Butchers-with-his-Head-Down were of the opinion that the horseman had not seen them.

“When the others had all spoken, he said to Small Robe: ‘This is what comes of your leading us on and on regardless of the bad signs that we have had, four warnings that we were heading into danger. That horseman saw us! He looked very carefully and very often to the east, the west, the north, but apparently not once to the south — toward us — and so tried to make us believe that he did not know that we are here. He overdid it! By pretending that he did not look at the country to the south, he proved that he saw us!’

“‘You are right!’ Small Robe exclaimed. ‘And now he has gone to bring his big party against us. We must hurry to find a good place to make our stand. Come, follow me.’

“To the west of them, and upon their side of the creek, was a large and thick grove of quaking aspens; they started running toward it, but had gone only a little way when the enemy, more than forty men, appeared on the north slope of the valley, and, led by the lone rider, ran to head them off from the grove. They soon got between them and the shelter, so they were obliged to stop in a little coulee; it had some brush on top of its banks, and a trickle of water ran down it to the creek. The enemy then stopped, counseled together, and, dividing into two parties, advanced to make their attack from both sides of the coulee. With four men, Butchers-with-his-Head-Down was lying low at the top of its east side, and on the other side was Small Robe, with the others.

“The lone rider was the chief of one party of the enemy, and he held his men back until the other party, led by a big man wearing a long-tailed war bonnet, had circled around to the east side of the coulee, when both parties advanced upon it, both singing war songs and brandishing their weapons. As they came on, Small Robe cried out: ‘Butchers-with-his-Head-Down, when sure that you can hit him, you shoot the leader of the party on your side, and I will shoot the horseback leader of those on my side. You

others, all of you, do not shoot until the enemy are almost to the edge of the coulee.'

"Both parties of the enemy were walking fast, both singing louder and louder their war songs. They came nearer and nearer, and, when Small Robe saw that the chief on horseback was about to order his men to charge, he fired, and the chief fell from his horse, dead when he struck the ground. At the same time Butchers-with-his-Head-Down fired at the other chief, and down he went. At that, both parties of the enemy turned and ran down the slope and into some willows at the edge of the creek. It was seen that the chief shot by Butchers-with-his-Head-Down was not dead, so Shoots Close ran out to finish him, and was almost to him when he suddenly sat up and fired, and the shot broke Shoots Close's leg, exactly where he had broken the leg of the stone figure, on the plain below. Others then ran out, killed the enemy chief, and brought Shoots Close into the coulee. The big artery in his leg had been severed; he was bleeding terribly, and soon died.

"The enemy remained in the brush down by the creek, and it was evident that they would not come up to attack again until they could do it under cover of the night. After much talk, it was decided that, as soon as it was dusk, and before

the enemy came up from the creek, the little party should go to the head of the coulee and crawl on and on through the sagebrush, to the top of the slope and out upon the plain. But said one of them, Flying-High Bird: 'These Assiniboine enemies are very wise; they far outnumber us: I feel that we shall never escape from them.'

"The day passed, and when it was quite dusk but not yet really dark, Small Robe led the little party to the head of the coulee, only a few steps up the slope, and from there they all started crawling on through the brush, low sagebrush that did not afford good cover, and had gone no more than halfway to the top of the slope when they discovered the enemy coming up after them, and they got up and ran, each man for himself. The enemy began firing, and Small Robe cried out that he was shot in the side. Butchers-with-his-Head-Down went to him, and was helping him on, when he was shot again, and killed. Then the shooter came closer, and was about to knock Butchers-with-his-Head-Down over with his empty gun, when he fired and killed him, and ran on as fast as he could go, to the aid of others close-pressed by the enemy. He saw them falling one by one, saw that he could not save any, and ran to save his own life, and overtook Facing West, shot in the arm, and, somehow,

they were not seen by the enemy and were not pursued.

“Now, when I went back after Small Robe’s paint sack, I found it right where he said he had left it, at the head of the grass couch I had made for him. I sat down there to rest, and became more and more afraid to strike out over the plain again, all alone in the daytime. Something seemed to be holding me there, telling me to remain right where I was until night. I took that warning. I remained there until night came and it was very dark, and then I started back across the plain. I walked very fast. After a time, Moon appeared, and by her light I saw, straight ahead of me, what I believed were two men. I threw myself flat upon the ground. They came nearer. I heard them talking, recognized their voices, and jumped up and ran to meet them, crying out to them not to shoot. They were Butchers-with-his-Head-Down and Facing West. Of all our little party, only they two, they who had taken pity on the rock image, had escaped from the Assiniboines. Right there we sat down, and they told me all that had happened; how, one after another, they had all been killed: first, Shoots Close, then Small Robe, Diving Man, Rattling Old Man, Bighorn, Takes-Gun-Inside, Flying-High Bird, Returning Crane, Small Body, Far-Side Chief, Cree Man, and Ice-Body.

“Said Butchers-with-his-Head-Down: ‘I don’t like to say this, but I must: for this that has happened, all these good men dead and gone to the Sand Hills, Small Robe was to blame. In the first place, his vision in our home camp was so uncertain that he should not have led us out to war, and then, after we started, he would not pay any attention to the four bad signs that we had along our unlucky trail. Anyhow, when we had that fourth and last bad sign, he should have turned and led us straight back to Bear River.’

“‘His Beaver Medicine, here upon my back, what shall I do with it?’ I asked.

“‘It passes to his eldest brother; you will give it to him,’ Facing West replied.

“‘Yes, you will do that,’ said Butchers-with-his-Head-Down. ‘That medicine is as powerful as ever it was. Small Robe used it in his prayers to Sun, and, when it gave him no vision that would warrant him in leading us on, he should have known that he was leading us into trouble. Perhaps the medicine caused him to forget his paint sack, so that he would send you back for it, and so save the medicine for the good of our tribe.’

“You all know how very powerful that Beaver Medicine is. Since that far-back time when I handed it over to Small Robe’s brother, Red

Crow, it has been carried by one and another of our chiefs upon many a successful war trail and has cured many of our sick ones. It has been good to me. It has enabled me to see eighty winters.

“Kyi! Pass the pipe, old friend, my war-trail story ends.”

CHAPTER IX

What the Sacred Buffalo Stone did for Women and for the Tribe

August 29

For some days our talk has been mainly of spiritual matters; about things Natowap'i (Sun power), or, as the early traders named them, medicines. Last night, when we were all gathered in Curly Bear's lodge, Boy Chief said to my son and me: "Spotted Robe, and you, Lone Wolf, the day is not far distant when you will be leaving us for your very far-off homes. Would that you remain with us, never leave us, but we cannot blame you for going south with Sun to the Always-Summer land, where it is impossible for Cold-Maker to follow with his dreadful snow and ice, and blinding, freezing, killing winds. Yes, you can go where winter is unknown, but even in Always-Summer land are various kinds of sickness and dangers along the trail, so, before you leave us, I want to make you safe from them, through the power of my Buffalo Stone ceremony."

"Good. Let us have it. At any time to suit you," I replied.

"To-morrow," he decided.

"You should tell them the history of the Buffalo Stone," Curly Bear said to him.

"Yes. Of course. Again fill the pipe, and, when it is going the round of our circle, I will tell the story of the sacred stone," he replied.

At that, Curly Bear carefully filled the huge long-stemmed, black stone pipe, passed it to Boy Chief to light, and, when he had smoked a few whiffs, muttered a short prayer to Sun and Earth Mother, he turned to my son and me, sitting opposite him, and began:

"Relatives, no doubt you know, in a way, the history of my sacred stone; you probably have forgotten some of it, so carefully listen:

"In the very long-ago, when our Pikuni ancestors were camping in a well-timbered river valley, the buffaloes suddenly disappeared. It was then the Falling Leaves moon. In the next moon, the first one of winter, the deer and elk and antelopes, and even the grouse, also disappeared, and the people ate sparingly and ever more sparingly of their few parflèches of dried meat and dried berries. Some of the men proposed that the tribe should pack up and strike out in search of the game; others said that it was best to remain right where they were, for without doubt the game would soon return. Then, in the following moon, when they had used about all of



BOY CHIEF



CURLY BEAR

their dried food, snow fell so deep that they could not move camp to go in search of game, and they began to starve.

“The first really to suffer from want of food were Black Elk and his three women. They had had many well-filled *parflèches* of dried meat, pemmican, back-fat, and dried berries, but they had fed many who were hungry, and now they had not one mouthful of food left. Several days passed, and they grew weak, and more weak, until of the three women, the youngest one, Mink Woman, was alone able to do the lodge work. Said Black Elk to her, near night of a terribly cold day: ‘I am too sick to move from my couch. Try, try to gather a little more wood; let us at least have a little firelight as our shadows leave our bodies and set out upon the long trail to the Sand Hills.’

“She went out, that young woman, and began looking about in the timber for dry light sticks that she could carry, and after she had gathered a back-load of them, and was carrying them toward the lodge, she heard, suddenly, singing somewhere near her, and looked in all directions, but could see no singer. It was new to her, the tune of that song; she was sure that she had never heard it before, and it was sung so low that she could not catch the words. At last, she went in

the direction from which it seemed to come. She went under a big tree that had shed the snow, and found that the singing was under a big log there; and now she could hear the words of the song, which were: 'Woman, come and take me. I am strong with Sun's power.'

"Kyi! Weak and faint and afraid, Mink Woman went behind the log and still could not see the singer, who kept singing, over and over, 'Woman, come and take me. I am strong with Sun's power.'

"Said to herself, this Mink Woman: 'Whoever this is, I must obey his song, I must take him.' So she conquered her fear, and, kneeling, lifted some bark that had slipped down from the log, and found under it, and resting upon a mat of buffalo hair, a small reddish-colored stone that had the shape of a buffalo. Then, when she discovered that it was this stone that was the singer, she was terribly afraid of it, and was about to turn and run from it, when it again sang, 'Woman, come and take me. I am strong with Sun's power.' And this time it sang so softly, so pleadingly, that she could not resist; she folded the little stone in its mat of hair and hid it in her bosom, and went home with her back-load of wood. There, she told no one, not even her man, of her strange find.

"Several days passed. The people became more and more feeble from want of food. Mink Woman carried the buffalo stone concealed in her bosom, slept with it close under her pillow of soft leather stuffed with curly, buffalo head hair. The stone had not once sung since she had taken it from its hiding-place under the log. Then, on the fourth night, while she slept, the stone said to her: 'Poor woman, I pity you and your poor starving people, and am going to help you. Now, listen carefully; I am going to tell you just what you must do to save your people.' And with that, the stone talked to her for some time, explaining all that must be done to induce the buffalo herds to return to that part of the country. And when it had finished, Mink Woman awoke, thought over her vision, and was distressed that it had given her so great responsibility. She saw that upon her, poor weak woman that she was, depended the life of her people: if she failed to follow exactly the stone's instructions, they would all of them soon perish.

"Morning came, and Mink Woman arose, built up the lodge fire, called to her man and to his other women to awake. Black Elk, warm in his buffalo robe couch at the back of the lodge, scolded her: 'Why awake me so early?' he cried. 'Why should I get up, only to sit before the fire,

and feel more severely than ever the pains of hunger?’

“‘You must get up at once and carefully listen, for I have something very strange, very wonderful, to tell you,’ she replied.

“‘Well, then, if I must get up, I will,’ he said, and ordered his sits-beside-him woman to get up and make room for him to dress.

“Then, soon, Mink Woman was telling him and the other women of her strange find. She took the stone in its hair wrapping from her bosom and showed it to them, told of its song, and, lastly, what it had told her in her sleep, her vision, must be done in order to call back the buffalo herds and save the people, all of them, from death by starvation.

“Black Elk listened carefully to all that she said, examined the strange-shaped stone, and handed it back to her, saying: ‘Right now, this day, I am the proudest man who ever lived. I am proud that I am your man, you whom Sun has favored, you whom he has chosen, in his own strange way, to save us all from early death. Repeat now, all that Buffalo Stone told you in your vision, so that we may make no mistakes, but fully carry out his every instruction. But wait, first let me call in our wise men, that they may also hear you.’

“From long fasting, Black Elk was very weak; he trembled as he put on his clothing and his moccasins, and staggered from his couch across the lodge and out the doorway, and his voice was low and trembling as he named one by one the wise men, inviting them to come at once to hear something very wonderful. They were soon gathered in his lodge, listening to Mink Woman’s strange tale, and staring at the strange-shaped stone, lying upon its bed of buffalo hair in front of her. They all agreed that she was a woman wonderfully favored by Sun; they revered her, cried out one and all of them that they were eager at once to learn from her the sacred stone’s instructions for bringing the buffalo herds back to the country.

“They were very simple, those first instructions of the sacred stone. Mink Woman taught the gathering of men — and women, too — the stone’s strange song. She then called for some sweet grass, and, burning it upon coals that she drew from the fire, she held the stone in the rising, perfumed smoke, and prayed it to pity her, to pity the Pikuni, every man, woman, and child of them, and bring to them the buffalo herds from wherever they were roaming. All day long and far into the night, there in Black Elk’s lodge, Mink Woman again and again purified herself

and the sacred stone with sweet grass smoke, and prayed the stone to bring the buffaloes, and with her the gathering of men and women sang over the sacred stone's song. And then, so weak that they could no longer sing and pray, they went to their couches and slept.

"In the dim light of coming day, an early riser went outside his lodge, and saw, up on the rim of the valley, a dark shape moving. His heart beat fast with hope, with doubt: was it truly a buffalo, or was he, in his weakness, just imagining that he could see a buffalo-shaped animal there upon the slope? He said nothing; just stood and stared until, in the increasing light, he was sure that his eyes did not deceive him. Then he cried loudly: 'Awake, you hunters! Come from your lodges and see what has arrived in the night!'

"Men, women, and children, they left their warm couches and went out into the terrible cold of early morning, and that which they saw up on the slope of the valley made their hearts beat fast. They saw not only the lone bull that the early riser had discovered; following him a great herd of buffaloes were coming down the slope from the plain; they were like a black river, there in the deep snow. They kept coming, more and more of them, and, led by the lone old bull, they went down into the upper end of the great bottom and halted there.

“As they watched the return of those animals, none in the great camp had so much as spoken. But now, when the herd had come to a stand, the Sun priests and chiefs came upon their weak and trembling legs to Mink Woman, to praise her for this that she had done through the power of her sacred stone, and that made Black Elk, standing beside her, so happy, so proud of her, his youngest woman, that, with tears streaming from his eyes, he lifted his hands to Sun, thanked him for giving her life, and begged him to keep her safe from all danger. And when he had finished, all that great gathering of the people echoed his words.

“Then a hunter suddenly exclaimed: ‘Yes, through the power of her sacred stone, this Sun woman has brought back our buffaloes, but, from long starving, I am too weak to go after them; so, speak up, you who still have strength of legs and arms to make a killing.’

“Said one, breaking a long silence during which hunter looked at hunter sadly, ‘If I had but a little food! Just three or four mouthfuls, I believe it would give me strength to go up there and shoot one or two fat cows!’

“‘Ha! Food! A — few — mouthfuls — ’ an old man quavered and fell down into the snow. All stared pityingly at him as his relatives lifted him to carry him to his lodge.

"Then, speaking so low that those nearest her could barely hear, an old woman said: 'I have food, one parflèche full of pemmican —'

"'She has it! Food! Pemmican! Keeping it, the old stingy, and we all starving!' cried a young woman.

"All stared at the old woman. She turned to Mink Woman and said: 'I have kept it all this long time of starving. I have starved just as you all have starved. I have had to fight myself, fight myself day and night and day and night to keep my hands off it. Once, I unlaced the parflèche and was about to reach into it and take a handful of pemmican, and something, I don't know what it was, made me draw out my hand, empty, and relace the parflèche and put it back in its place.'

"'The gods, Sun himself, doubtless, made you keep that pemmican, keep it for this day of great need! Wonderful are the ways of the gods!' Black Elk cried, and all agreed with him.

"Standing there in the terrible cold, the chiefs counseled together, and quickly chose ten hunters to go to the lodge of the old woman and eat, and then go up to the buffalo herd and make a killing. They followed her into her lodge, and she unlaced the parflèche and set it before them. They were wise: they ate but little of it, and very slowly. Their strength came back to them, and

they went out and got their bows and arrows, and, going into the timber and brush along the shore of the river, sneaked up through it toward the great herd. Shivering, trembling, the people stood and watched the buffaloes, the hundreds and hundreds at the upper end of the bottom. Some were lying down, some standing with lowered heads, some pawing the deep snow and eating the grass that they exposed. Sun trailed higher and higher up into the blue, and the herd remained as it was. The people could not bear the cold and were obliged to go back into their lodges. They wondered what the ten hunters were doing; why they were so very, very long in approaching the herd. At last, one who had gone out from his lodge to watch again, gave warning that the herd was running, and all the people rushed out to see it go. One of the ten hunters had stampeded it, and it was going swiftly through a narrow passway to the next bottom above, just a narrow neck of a passage between a cliff and the high cutbank of the river. And there, with their backs to the cliff, and protected by some big rocks that had fallen from it, were the nine hunters. As the herd crowded past them, so close that they could almost reach out and touch the frightened animals, they shot, with careful aim, arrow after arrow into the big cows,

one arrow to one cow, deep into the killing place just back of the ribs. The people could not see what those hunters were doing, but they knew. They went back into their lodges for their flint knives, and then, as fast as their weak legs would permit, started up the bottom. By that time the herd had disappeared, but they could see that the upper end of the narrow pass was black with dead animals, and could see others, badly wounded, that the hunters were dropping one by one. The sight of all that gave them strength to go on, to get up to the great killing and begin skinning the animals and cutting out the tongues and some of the fat back meat to eat at once. Fires were built in the nearest timber, and they quickly roasted their cuttings and ate, and then went back and finished their work. Those nine hunters had killed one hundred and three big fat cows. Night had come when the last of them were skinned and cut up. With all the meat that they could carry, the people returned to their lodges to feast and sleep, all but a few men who remained at the killing place to keep the wolves off during the night. The wolves had come back into the country with the buffaloes, and were howling and circling around and around, sniffing the blood-scented air and licking their lips, but with several fires the watchers kept them from the meat.

"In Black Elk's lodge that night, the wise men of the tribe talked of the wonderful power of the Buffalo Stone. They marveled that it had called to a woman, and not to one of them, they who had passed its resting-place many times, to take it up. Said Black Elk, finally: 'We have all of us made a mistake. We have always believed that to men only Sun gave some of his wonderful power. We now know that he has as much regard for women as he does for men; so, from now on, we must allow them to take part in our sacred ceremonies.'

"All the men in that council agreed with him in what he had said. They cautioned Mink Woman to take great care of the Buffalo Stone, and one said that she would doubtless have more visions as to its care and its use.

"On the following day, and the next day, all the people of the great camp were bringing the meat of the wonderful killing down to their lodges, where the women cut it into thin sheets for drying and for making pemmican. The women and girls could talk of naught but Mink Woman and her Buffalo Stone. Sun had selected her, a woman just as they were, to hear the pleading song of the sacred thing, and to take it up, and, following its instructions, save the people from starvation. They had always believed that they

were nothing-persons, beneath Sun's notice. Like the men, they had occasionally, in their sleep, had visions, but they had thought it useless for them, just women, even to try to interpret their strange experiences. But now Mink Woman had proved that Sun had as much regard for them as he had for men, and from this time on they would heed their visions, and, following them, have sacred ceremonies of their own. Finally, the wisest women of the tribe held a council with Mink Woman, their sacred chief, and, when it was ended, they went to the council of chiefs and demanded that they be allowed to take part in their sacred Sun ceremonials. Their demand was granted: from that day, women had an ever-increasing share in sacred matters, until, finally, they, and not the men, conducted the ceremonies of the building of the great lodge that was given to Sun, every summer in the Berries Ripe moon.

"Yes, and as was predicted, Mink Woman had more Buffalo Stone visions, and following its instructions, little by little and year by year, she built up some great ceremonies for it, and greatest of these was the ceremony of the buffalo trap, with which at one time the people were enabled to secure enough meat to last them for many moons. At the foot of a cliff, she had the people build a large corral of logs, poles, stones, and tree

branches, the cliff itself forming its rear side. Then, from the top of the cliff directly above the corral, she had them place two ever-widening lines of stone piles far out on to the plain. When this was done, she taught a brave young man to do certain things that would, she said, arouse the curiosity of the buffaloes and cause them to follow him. And then she rested. The people became impatient. Her man and the other chiefs kept saying to her: 'We have worked hard to build this trap for you, and you do nothing with it. Come, show us that our work has not been for nothing.'

"'The time has not come for that,' she would reply, and more than that she would not say. Not even to her man would she give her reason for not using the trap, and the people began to fear that Sun was displeased with her; a few of them suspected that the trap was not the result of her Buffalo Stone visions, but was just her own foolish idea of what might be done with it.

"Winter came, and on a clear and cold day, Mink Woman went up on top of the trap cliff, looked out upon the snow-covered plain, and, returning to her lodge, told her man to call in the chiefs. They came, and, when all were seated, she said to them: 'The time has now come when we may use our trap. From now on, let the hunters

go out for meat only upon the plain on the other side of the river. Appoint certain ones of the young men to watch the plain out from the trap cliff, and notify us whenever a herd of buffaloes is discovered out from the wide mouth of the rock pile lines. Then, if the wind is right, you shall have meat in plenty.'

"'But why have you waited so long to use the trap?' one asked.

"'Because my sacred stone warned me that it should be used only in winter, when the buffalo are fat and have heavy growth of hair,' she answered.

"A few days later, when the watchers went, at daylight, to the top of the cliff, they discovered a great herd of buffaloes feeding and resting upon the plain, well out from the mouth of the two lines of rock piles, and sent one of their number down to give Mink Woman the news. She, in turn, sent for her buffalo caller, and told him to find out, for sure, the direction of the wind. It was a still morning, there seemed to be no wind, but the young man held up a few buffalo hairs and let them go, and they drifted to the south. It was in the right direction, for the buffaloes were to the north of the trap, and would be unable to scent the caller when he approached them. He left at once, and then Mink Woman had the

camp crier notify the people to go out and conceal themselves behind the rock piles, and to be sure to go slowly, so as not to alarm the buffaloes.

“They were mostly women and old men who had been selected to go to the rock piles. As they began climbing the steep slope to the east of the trap cliff, and the hunters and others started to surround the corral at the foot of it, three women came to help Mink Woman in her Buffalo Stone ceremony, she having taught them its songs, and instructed them in performing the ceremony, as had been revealed to her from time to time by her sacred visions. First, she unwrapped the Buffalo Stone, setting it before her upon its little bed of buffalo hair. She then dropped a little sweet grass upon a few coals that she drew from the lodge fire, and purified herself in its smoke, meantime praying the stone, and its great chief, Sun, to have pity upon her and all the people, and give the buffalo caller out upon the plain success in decoying the herd to their death at the foot of the cliff. Then, while she frequently prayed, and between prayers, sang with her helper women the Buffalo Stone songs, as she had been taught them in her visions, she kept burning very slowly a long braid of sweet grass, a braid so long that it would stretch clear across the lodge. The braid represented the herd of buf-

faloes, and the burning of it meant that the herd must come into the mouth of the lines of rock piles, following the caller, and, like the braid, soon come to its end.

“Up on the plain the people had sneaked out to the many rock piles and lain down behind them. The lone caller, all humped over and covered with a buffalo robe, had approached the great herd, not directly, but diagonally, first going to the right, then to the left, but ever nearer the animals, until he had approached as closely as he dared. He then uttered the calls that Mink Woman had taught him, and they were two. He was glad when he saw that the buffaloes seemed to understand them. An old cow, the leader of the herd, first took notice of him, raising her head and staring at him. He turned, and began walking back toward the mouth of the rock pile lines, and she advanced a few steps, and stopped, still staring at him. He again gave his strange calls, and she came on, the others, one by one and by twos and threes, and then more and more, starting to follow her until the whole herd was in motion. Then the caller walked faster, and still faster until he was running, and the old cow began running to overtake him, and the herd came crowding after her. It was as though she could not understand what he

was, and wanted very much to know. It is believed that at such times the buffaloes think that the caller is one of them, a young one in trouble, and that they must go to help it.

"The caller ran into the mouth of the rock pile lines, straight toward the cliff, the buffaloes following him. He kept looking back at them, and when he saw that the rear end of the herd had passed the outer end of the lines, he ran faster than ever until he came to a dip in the plain. He was there out of sight of the animals, and, following the dip to the right, he sank down behind a rock pile, close beside a couple of old men who were concealed there. Now, when the old cow leader and others in the front of the herd lost sight of the caller, they slowed up and wanted to stop running; they couldn't understand what had become of the one that they were hurrying to save from some great danger. But they couldn't stop, for right at that time the people concealed behind the rock piles at the outer end of the two long lines, rose up, shouting and waving their robes, and so frightened the rear animals of the herd that they ran faster than ever, crowding, pushing the leaders, obliging them to keep on running. Then the leaders saw people on each side of them suddenly springing up from behind the rock piles, and so kept on running straight

ahead, the one direction in which the way seemed to be clear. They saw that people were continually springing up on each side of them, and nearer and nearer them, and they went crazy from fear. They ran faster and faster, and behind them and upon their right and their left came the people, shouting and waving their robes.

“Now, as the big herd ran between the ever-narrowing lines of the rock piles and neared the cliff came the time of danger to the people, for if at the last the old cow leader and those with her should turn aside instead of plunging down off the cliff, the whole herd would turn, too, and trample many of them to death. Just at the top of the steep slope to the east of the cliff, with only his head exposed, and it screened by a clump of sagebrush, stood an old man, watching the herd. He suddenly turned and went down the slope a few steps, and signed to a woman standing outside Mink Woman’s lodge, ‘The buffalo are nearing the cliff!’ And she cried out to those inside the lodge, ‘The old man signs that they are approaching the jumping-off place!’ At that, Mink Woman seized her Buffalo Stone and pressed it close to her bosom, and prayed as fast as she possibly could: ‘O you, my sacred Buffalo Stone! You, strong with Sun’s power! Pity us now! Do not allow the buffaloes out there to turn and

trample the people! Make them run straight to the cliff, make them jump off it, all, all of them! Oh, pity us, pity us, give all long and full life!’

“That she prayed over and over, faster and faster, her helper women continuously crying: ‘Yes, sacred Buffalo Stone! Pity our dear ones up there! Do not let the buffaloes trample them! Have pity, have pity, have pity for us all!’

“Suddenly, the woman standing outside cried to them: ‘They come! They are jumping off!’ Hearing that, and followed by her helpers, Mink Woman ran from the lodge, still holding close to her bosom the Buffalo Stone. She saw the buffaloes jumping from the high cliff down into the corral at the foot of it. She held up her sacred stone, for it also to see that wonderful sight: ‘You did it!’ she cried. ‘You taught us how to obtain all the food that is coming down off the cliff!’ And then, her eyes so full of tears that she could barely see, she ran to the corral with her helpers, and, looking into it, saw that it was full of dead and dying buffaloes, and others, still standing, that were being shot down by the hunters. And those hunters, seeing her there, shouted to her: ‘You, with your Buffalo Stone, you are the one who made this great killing of meat. Woman though you are, you are a chief!’

“There! I have told you how my sacred Buf-

falo Stone was found, and how powerful it was as a food-bringer. It was not then known, however, that it had other power —”

“Wait!” Heavy Eyes exclaimed. “I want to say something about the trapping of the buffaloes. Of all our tribe, my sister and I are the only living ones who saw it done, and we saw it but once: but before I tell you about it, let me relate what I learned from my father, Rising Wolf, and my grandfather, and other old men:

“From the time that wonderful woman, Mink Woman, found the Buffalo Stone and was instructed by it to make a buffalo trap, the hunters depended more on it than they did on their bows and arrows, for keeping their lodges supplied with meat. After all, the bow and arrow was not much of a meat-getter: the hunter had to sneak up very close to an animal in order to shoot an arrow deep into its body, and the animal had to be broadside to him, so that he could put the arrow into it just back of the ribs, and on into its heart, liver, or lungs, in order surely and quickly to kill it. That, you see, was not an easy thing to do. So it was that the people depended mainly upon the buffalo trap for their living. And for how many, many, many hundreds and hundreds of years!

“Until, going south to war, they discovered

that certain enemy tribes had elk-dogs, big animals that they rode, and made to carry their lodges and all their belongings when they moved camp. They saw them sit upon these elk-dogs and chase herds of buffaloes, ride right up beside the animals and shoot quickly, with sure-placed arrows, as many as they wanted. They took some of those elk-dogs, a few at first, then more and more of them, until they had many. Then, when they, too, could chase herds of buffaloes with their swiftest runners, and kill all that they wanted of them, they depended less and less upon the buffalo trap for obtaining their supplies of food and skins. Then came the white men traders into their country, and when they obtained guns from them, weapons with which they could kill buffaloes and other food animals at long distance, they all but ceased using the buffalo trap, would have ceased using it long before my father's time had it not been for the women, who insisted that they must now and then use their sacred buffalo trap, else the Buffalo Stone, doubtless Sun himself, would become angry at the tribe and bring terrible trouble of some kind upon it.

“But, plead as the women would, the buffalo trap was used less and less frequently, until, in my father's time, he saw buffaloes decoyed over

the cliffs but six times, and the very last time was when I was seven winters old, and with the Pikuni we were camped on this Two Medicine Lodges River, just below here, right where now stands the Black Robes' house.¹ Just above there, up around the bend of the river and on its north side, as you all know, is the buffalo trap. Of course, the corral at the foot of the cliff has long since disappeared, but from the top of the cliff and extending far out upon the plain, and just as our ancient ones placed them, are the two lines of rock piles in between which the herds were first decoyed by the caller, and then stampeded by the people in one last rush to the cliff and over it into the corral.

"Haiyo! How many we were then, the Pikuni! We were all of eight hundred lodges, camped in that bottom below the buffalo trap, and sheltered from the winds by the big grove of cottonwoods bordering the river. We had moved there from Big River in the Falling Leaves moon, and it was now the Middle Winter moon. There had been a strong and warm Black Wind, melting all the snow except deep drifts in the coulees and upon the east sides of the hills. My mother was invited one day, soon after sunset, to a feast and council in the lodge of Flying Woman, owner of

¹ Holy Family Mission.

the Buffalo Stone, and when it was over she returned to us so excited that she could hardly speak. 'What happiness!' she cried, as soon as she got her breath. 'It is actually to be! The council of chiefs has promised Flying Woman that she shall call the buffaloes, use the buffalo trap, just above here!'

"'Ha! Good!' said my father, and we children clapped our hands and were at once even more excited than our mother; we were to see that which we had feared we never should see, buffaloes tumbling down over a cliff. And as we began to talk about it, ask when it would take place, we heard the camp crier going his rounds, and shouting over and over so that all would hear: 'Listen! Listen, you people! Flying Woman is to decoy the buffaloes into the trap above here! So says the council of chiefs. You men, you are warned that you may not hunt north of the river, nor herd your horses out there after this night. Men, women, and children, to-morrow you are to rebuild the corral at the foot of the cliff.'

"Friends, that was a night of great excitement, of great happiness in the camp of the Pikuni! In every lodge the women and children were talking and talking about the wonderful news that the camp crier had told, and even the men in their gatherings talked about it and nothing else. I

remember that I was so excited that I slept but little, and got up and built our lodge fire at the first signs of coming day. In every lodge the women prepared a very early meal, and then we all went up into the timber opposite the foot of the cliff, and began carrying and dragging out material for the corral, logs, poles, tree branches, even sheets of dead and fallen bark. We built it upon the remains of the old corral that had long since rotted down into dust, and we built it high and strong, and were so many doing the work that we finished it long before night. As I remember, it was about one hundred steps across from side to side, and from the foot of the cliff to the side toward the river, about seventy steps. We were all of us very tired when we turned and went down to camp.

“That evening, Flying Woman named the young men who were to watch for the buffaloes to appear out from the mouth of the two lines of rock piles; each one of them, of course, had gone to war against the enemy and counted *coups* upon them; and for the buffalo caller, she named — why, who do you think? No other than Black Eagle, grandfather of Apikuni’s son here, Lone Wolf! A powerful warrior he was even then. That evening, too, and on every evening thereafter, and assisted by three women helpers, my

mother one of them, Flying Woman gave her Buffalo Stone ceremony, and prayed the stone, and Sun, too, to give her big success in her undertaking. At those times the camp was very quiet, for all listened to the prayers and the singing of the Buffalo Stone songs, and every one, even the children, prayed that a big herd of buffaloes would soon be sighted and decoyed over the cliff. Flying Woman fasted, neither ate nor drank from the time Sun rose in the morning until he went to his lodge at night, and my mother and the other two helpers did that, too. And during every evening ceremony in her lodge, Flying Woman had the caller, Black Eagle, sit beside her, and she painted his face and hair and hands with the sacred red earth paint, and handed him the sacred Buffalo Stone to hold, and pray it to give him power surely to decoy a herd of buffaloes to the trap.

“Daily, almost the watchers up on the cliff reported herds of buffaloes to the north of it, but they were always on the move, or resting east and west of the mouth of the rock pile lines. My brothers and sisters and I wanted, when the time came, to help stampede the buffaloes over the cliff, but our father would not allow that. He said that it was too dangerous, that buffalo herds had been known to break out through one or the other

of the lines of rock piles, instead of going on over the cliff, and in their crazed rush trample many people to death. He promised us, though, that we should see the buffaloes called, and then see them come over the cliff.

“One evening, as Sun was going to his lodge, he painted himself,¹ and our wise ones, seeing it, said that that meant bloodshed, perhaps an attack by the enemy, maybe that we were to butcher many buffaloes. The following morning broke cold and windless, and the watchers, going to the top of the cliff, sent one of their number running back down to Flying Woman, to tell her that a herd of buffaloes was resting straight north of the mouth of the trap lines. She at once had the camp crier give out the good news, and called Black Eagle to her lodge to paint him with the sacred red earth and pray for his safety and success, for the last time; and while she was doing that, the people who were to hide behind the rock piles were hurrying up the steep slope east of the cliff, and then slowly sneaking out to their places. As he had promised to do, our father led us children up the slope until, with just our heads above the top of it, we could see the buffaloes; they were many, all close together and resting — some of them lying down — upon the slope of a ridge in

¹ Sun dogs.

the plain, some little distance out from the ends of the lines of rock piles. Sun appeared as we arrived at the top of the slope; he had again painted himself. The air was full of shining, dancing, drifting frost, south drifting, as from the buffaloes to us. Seen through that glitter of frost, the buffaloes appeared to be twice as large and twice as near us as they really were. Looking back toward camp, we saw Black Eagle coming up the slope, coming slowly.

"As he was passing us, my father said to him: 'May you be fully successful in this that you are to do!'

"Now that the time has come for me to attempt this sacred calling of the buffaloes, I fear that I haven't sufficient power of Sun. Pray for me, you and your children, pray Sun to help me,' he replied.

"We will! We will pray hard for you!' we cried; and did so, every one of us.

"And then our elder brother, Piskan, said to our father: 'How wrinkled was his forehead! How sad and worried his eyes!'

"Yes. It is a heavy load that he carries: the safety of those people out there!' my father answered.

"Look as we would, and we were no more than two hundred steps from the nearest rock piles, we

the shouting of the people, the stampeders, growing louder and louder, and then, suddenly, the buffaloes began coming off from the cliff. Some of them, at the very edge of it, seemed to try to spring off, but before they could do that they were pushed off by the crowding of those behind, and down they came, back first, head first, and sideways, a constant falling of them, like a river of black water pouring from a cliff. At first, the crashing of their heavy bodies upon the rocks below was like loud thunder in our ears; but as more and more came down, piling upon top of those already down and dead and dying, the noise lessened to just faint thuds. Hai! It was a wonderful, a terrible, yes, and a sickening sight, the falling of the buffaloes from the top of that high cliff! It gave all of us children a sick feeling in our stomachs, and our youngest sister actually vomited, and then, crying, ran to find her mother.

“It seemed to be a long time that the buffaloes were coming down off the cliff, but of course it was a very short time, no longer, probably, than it would have taken to count forty. The tail end of the herd came thudding down. We saw some of the stampeders standing at the edge of the cliff, looking down, and, following our father, we ran to the corral. We climbed to the top of it and looked in: saw some dead buffaloes, dead right where

they had fallen, but many of the herd were still alive, some unable to get up, broken-legged ones standing humped up or limping about, and not a few, apparently uninjured by their fall, were madly rushing along the inner edge of the corral trying to find a way out of it, and were fast being shot down by the hunters. These were all soon killed, and then the hunters went right into the corral and finished those that were still living. The chiefs together then counted the animals and found that they were many more than had been thought; big and little, cows and calves and young bulls and all, they were four hundred and thirty-one! The chiefs apportioned them to the members of their clans and the butchering began. In one little clear place in the corral stood Flying Woman and her three women helpers, including my mother, and beside them was Black Eagle. To them soon began to come the butcherers, men and women, with offerings of the choicest parts of the animals, the tongues and dorsal ribs; and one and all, as they made their offerings, prayed Sun to give the five, they who had made the decoying of the big herd a success, long life and great happiness.

"There, my friends, that was the wonderful sight I saw in the long ago, just below here on this Two Medicine Lodges River!"

For some little time after Heavy Eyes ended his tale of the buffalo trap, none spoke; one and all of them, my old friends, sat very still and solemn and sad-eyed. Then White Grass remarked, so low that he was all but inaudible: "How fully complete were the lives of our fathers, and their fathers before them! They knew not want! From Big River of the North south to Elk River,¹ they roamed the plains and were never out of sight of buffaloes, their food, their clothing, their lodge covering! And we their children — Haiya!"

Then another long silence, and said Boy Chief: "I am low-hearted. We will not have my Buffalo Stone ceremony to-day."

¹ From the Saskatchewan to the Yellowstone.

CHAPTER X

We hear more about the Buffalo Stone

YESTERDAY, when White Grass's sad remark broke our plan for the day, my son and I got into the canoe and went up the lake to fish. In six or eight feet of water where the inlet comes in, we caught some fine trout, cutthroats of two and three pounds, and one fontinalis of all of four pounds weight. We then went down the west shore and landed at a point where we, just his mother, he, and I, had put in several months, from early October to the middle of January, in the winter of 1885-86; almost forty years ago. My son had but few recollections of the place, for he was a very small boy at the time. We had lived in a small cabin with a fireplace that I had previously built with the help of my friend, Bear Head. After cleaning our trout, we went back into the timber to see the cabin; a four-square mound of rotted logs and the fallen stones of the fireplace were its desolate remains. In front of it had stood a small pine, upon which I had hung my killings, elk, deer, bighorns and goats, and occasional bunches of ruffed grouse; it was now a large tree. At that time I had found the bighorns most plentiful along the shell-rock slope of the

mountain straight back from the cabin, and, going up there one morning in early November, I killed two very fat rams. I butchered them, hung the quarters in the nearest pine, and went home. On the following morning, when I went up with my horses to bring down the meat, I found the eight quarters scattered in all directions in the timber below the tree in which I had hung them, some partly eaten, others still whole. Tracks of the night prowlers proved that they were wolverines. I gathered the spoiled quarters into one pile and poisoned them with a bottle of strychnine, and packed home the rest of the meat. Upon returning there, two days later, I found five dead wolverines around the bait; a remarkable killing of these always rare and solitary animals. Although they never had enemies other than man that could or would kill them, they were never anywhere plentiful, as I had learned from the old-time trappers of the Hudson's Bay Company and the American Fur Company. Chief Coward, a great hunter, once told me that, sitting one day upon a cliff of Cutbank River valley, and up near the edge of the pines, he was looking for game with his telescope, when he discovered a wolverine walking up a plain dusty trail bordering the river, and then sighted three wolves coming down it. The lead wolf stopped short when he saw the

wolverine, and the other two wolves ranged alongside him and also stared at it, and the wolverine stood rigidly and stared at them. Presently the wolves darted forward and, circling around and around the wolverine, made rushes at it, as though they wanted to bite into its back when its head was turned away from them, but the little animal was always too quick for them. It kept whirling about so rapidly that it seemed at all times to be facing all three of the enemy, and after a time they drew off a little way and sat down upon their haunches to recover their breath, the wolverine remaining in the trail and watching them. Then all three again rushed at it, circling and circling and trying to seize it from its rear, but, as before, its head was always to them; it whirled about so rapidly, facing now one and then another of the wolves, that it seemed to be not one but ten wolverines. Failing then to nip it even once, the wolves drew off a little way, stared at it for a short time, and turned and trotted off down the trail. The wolverine watched them until they disappeared, and then he turned about and walked on up the trail and into the pines.

Standing there by the ruins of the cabin, I told my son these long-ago incidents of animal life.

Said he: "I cannot remember anything about the animals you killed then, but I do remember

the grouse that you brought in; my mother split them open and broiled them for us."

"Yes. And fat steaks of bighorn and other game."

"And we used to go to the head of the lake and catch trout through a hole that you chopped in the ice."

"Yes, we did that sometimes."

"And my mother broiled the trout, too. I remember that. What a kind, happy, generous mother she was! Always joking and laughing; telling funny stories. And how all the people respected her, and my grandmother, too. Both were Sun Women; they both were Medicine Lodge Women. I remember my mother leading me into a Medicine Lodge; she received from the Weather Maker a small portion of the sacred dried tongue; shared it with me and had me eat half of my portion, and bury the other half in the ground while she prayed Earth Mother to give you and me and her long and happy and successful life. She so firmly believed in her gods; was so happy in her belief. And she had to come to her end so soon, when life was so pleasant for her —"

"Let's go. Let's talk of other things; it is not good for us to dwell upon those dead and gone times," I said.

"You are right. It does hurt," he replied.

We returned to camp a little after noon, and found our friends preparing to move. The women were taking down the lodges, the men bringing in the horses and saddling them, Naoma standing watching them all, apparently bewildered by their sudden decision to leave there.

"What's up?" Hart asked.

"Don't know; I couldn't understand what they said to me," she replied.

Boy Chief came to us. "We are going to move up to the foot of the next lake, so that we can have our Buffalo Stone ceremony close to Rising Bull Mountain; there where we can see the whole front of it. I feel that the ceremony will be of greater benefit to us all if we have it there, close to the sacred mountain. But you can't take your guns up there; a Government trail-watcher would seize them; you will have to go without them —"

"And that is another wrong the Great Father did us!" White Dog put in. "When we sold these mountains to him, it was plainly said, and so written on the paper that his buyers and we sellers signed, that we should always have the right to hunt in them, and cut in them all the timber that we should want for our own use. We did that for a time after we made the sale, and then, suddenly, the Great Father said that we could neither hunt nor cut timber in them, and

put his watchers everywhere in them, to seize us and put us in an iron-barred house if we should do that. Now, do you think that was fair to us?"

"Well, everywhere the elk, deer, bighorns, goats, and other animals were being killed off, as the buffaloes were, so the Great Father and his helpers made these mountains a place of refuge for them, where they can live and increase, and for all time to come people can see them wandering about and grazing and unafraid," I explained.

"Ha! That is all very well for the whites, they who always have more food than they can eat, but it is very unjust to us Pikuni! Hungry, and without means to buy food, we look at these animals that we are unjustly forbidden to kill, and our hearts get hot with anger," he replied.

"It is the law; it cannot be changed; never again will the Pikuni nor the whites hunt up there," I said.

"Haiya, Apikuni! You, a Pikuni, though your skin is white, I did not think that you would be against us in this matter!" he sorrowfully exclaimed.

"I am not against you. I think it right that the animals in these mountains should be protected so that they will be more and more plentiful. Some of them will wander down on to your lands, where you can kill them; just now you have been

eating elk, animals that would never have been born had not the Great Father made a preserve of the mountains. I do say, though, that you should be paid, and well paid, for losing your right to hunt in them."

"Ha! Paid! That is one thing that the Great Father never does! We own all the country from here south to Elk River! The Great Father took it from us, never paid us for it; do you think, then, that he will pay us for taking our mountain food animals from us? He never, never will!" the old man exclaimed as he hurried off to catch his straying saddle-horse.

My son took our guns down to his studio, while Naoma and I packed our belongings upon the horses allotted us, and when he returned our little caravan was in line to start. As it strung out upon the trail up the lake, our old men in the lead, the women following and herding along their pack-horses and travois horses, I thought of our caravans of the long ago, caravans several miles long, three thousand of us Pikuni, with fifteen thousand or more horses, stringing across the plains; down the Judith River; over on the Musselshell; down it to the Missouri; and across it into the Little Rockies and the Bear Paws, year after year our camp red with the meat of the buffalo. And then, suddenly, buffalo no more,

and our far and care-free wanderings ended. I try not to think of the terrible hardships my old friends have experienced since the extermination of the buffalo. They were three thousand happy people; to-day they number less than nine hundred!

As we crossed the Park line, opposite the head of the lake, the ranger came from his cabin, looked us over, and let us pass. A little farther on, I turned off the hard-beaten automobile road and rested a few minutes at the foot of Running Eagle Falls, gushing from the dark and forbidding cavern in the face of the cliff, and roaring down into the deep pool at its base. A mile above, the river suddenly sinks in a mass of broken bed-rock, and courses through a subterranean channel to its end in the face of the cliff. Nowhere in the world, so far as I know, is there a falls like this, and I am more than pleased that it bears the name of the long-ago, virgin woman warrior of the Pikuni, the only woman of the tribe of the Pikuni who was given a man's name, and a great warrior name at that.

In years long past, the main game and horse trail running up and down the valley crossed the river just below the fall, and many a time I left my horse at the crossing and went up to the foot of the fall, sometimes alone and sometimes with

companions, to sit for a time and smoke. There were always hundreds of large trout in the deep clear pool into which it foams. On several lone and cautious approaches to it, I have seen otters and minks fishing there. I saw a number of trout there to-day, and tracks of a mink along the shore.

We made camp close to the shore of the outlet of this Middle Two Medicine Lake, and close under the floor of Rising Wolf Mountain, and, while the women were setting up the lodges and getting settled in them, we men sat in the shade of a lone spruce and smoked. Before us, at the head of the rather round lake, we could see, from its base to its sharp summit, Rising Bull Mountain. It really has the shape of the sharp hump-back of a buffalo, and, as Curly Bear said, it has the appearance of a monstrously big bull's back as the animal is heaving up on to his feet. However, it was named after Rising Bull, a great chief and warrior of the Pikuni, who died more than fifty years ago. On the map, it is Mount Rockwell! I am mighty glad that there is in the range no Mount Schultz! True, up in the Swift Current region of the Park, there is Apikuni Mountain, but it was named without my knowledge or consent. However, Apikuni is a very ancient name; a name that many Pikuni chiefs have borne, the

last an old friend who, having counted *coups* upon five Assiniboines that he had killed, gave me the name, and himself took the name Running Crane. Let us say that Apikuni Mountain was named for him.

"To me, this is the most beautiful place in these mountains," I said, as I took a few whiffs of the pipe and passed it on.

"No! The upper one of the Lakes Inside¹ and the mountains upon each side of it and beyond, that is the most beautiful place," said Raven Chief.

"Beautiful, but too terrible, the high-cliffed mountains there, the lake so deep that it is black, the thunder of falling ice always in one's ears. There, one feels oppressed by all that he sees and hears; here, the mountains and lake and timbered valley are kind; here, one's heart is calm," said Curly Bear.

"Myself, I never did like these mountains!" White Grass exclaimed. "My favorite camping-places were the gentle river valleys out there; the plains upon either side of them where one could run buffaloes, or still-hunt them, and antelopes, too, and easily keep his lodge supplied with meat."

"Yes! Who would climb mountains to kill big-

¹ Upper St. Mary's Lake.

horns and goats when he could live so easily out upon the buffalo plains?" said Boy Chief.

"As we can have neither buffaloes nor these mountain animals, why talk about them? It is best to try to forget all that we have lost," Heavy Eyes put in; and after that none spoke until, presently, from one lodge and another came the welcome cry: "Kahkit'soyit pwoau!" (Come and eat).

Later on, as we sat before the evening fire in our lodge, Boy Chief started the big pipe going the round of our little circle, and said to my son and me: "Kyi! I will now tell you two the rest of the history of my Buffalo Stone.

"As I said before, it was not at first known that it had power other than that of enabling its finder, Mink Woman, to decoy herds of buffaloes to their death at the foot of the trap cliffs — with the aid of her chosen helpers, of course. But her man, Black Elk, fell sick, and after all the doctors of the tribe had tried to cure him and failed, and when he was about to die, so weak that he could no longer leave his couch, she determined to see what her sacred stone could do for him. She called in her three women helpers and began the sacred ceremony. She exposed the stone, resting upon its bed of buffalo hair; she purified herself with sweet grass smoke, and with her helpers

sang its songs. She prayed to it, begged it to cure her man of his terrible sickness; and, sitting beside the sick one, she had him place his hands upon it, and, with her help, stroke his body with it, the while he prayed it to make him well. At once, even before the end of the ceremony, he began to feel better, and on the following day was able to sit up and eat soup, and upon the fourth day after the ceremony, he was as well as ever he had been. After that, and through the hundreds and hundreds of winters down to this day, the sacred stone has been not only a powerful healer of the sick, but has, to those for whom its owners have given its ceremony, prevented them becoming sick, and preserved them from all dangers so that they have lived to reach old age. That is why I shall give this ceremony for you two; that you may both have full and happy lives and attain old age.

“As I said, the other day, the Buffalo Stone was owned by women, and to them alone was the power given to call the buffaloes. When Mink Woman, its first owner, was dying, very old and glad to go, she gave the stone to her daughter, and from her it went to woman after woman down to the time when it could be no longer used to call the buffaloes. It then became the property of a man, who used it for curing the sick, and ever since then it has passed from man to man, either

by gift or by sale. Myself, falling sick, some winters back, I bought it, for five horses, from Bull Turns Around, and its wonderful power soon made me well. There! You now know all about it, and to-morrow, here under this sacred Rising Bull Mountain, you shall be helped by its great power."

"But, friend, one thing you omitted: you did not tell them about Buffalo Stone's children, its helpers," said White Grass.

"Ah! How could I have omitted that!" Boy Chief exclaimed, and, again turning to us, he explained: "In a long-ago time, a woman owner of the store was told by it, while she was sleeping, that it did not like to remain alone. It said that it had children, scattered here and there, and that, whenever she found one of them, she must bring it home to keep it company, help it give of its power in the calling of the buffaloes and healing of the sick. In her time, that woman found one of the children and brought it in to live with its father; then, later on, others of its women owners found more of them. They are now six, here with it in its sacred wrappings. There! Now you two do know all about it."

CHAPTER XI

*The Buffalo Stone Ceremony: Close under Rising Bull Mountain
my Son and I are painted with the Sacred Red, Sun's Own Color*

AT last we have had the Buffalo Stone ceremony, but not without some difficulties. Yesterday, when my son carried our guns down to his studio, he met a friend who promised to come up to-day and take some photographs of the ceremony. Boy Chief was pleased when we told him about it. "Time was when I would have objected," he said, "but not now! Not now! Our sacred ceremonies are to die with us old people, so it is well that pictures now be made of them for our children to look at; it may cause them to regret that they denied our ancient and true beliefs; it may cause them, in their days of trouble, to forsake their bad ways and turn again to Sun for help."

By ten o'clock this morning, Boy Chief and his woman had finished their preparations for the ceremony. The lodge had been set in perfect order, the couches covered with blankets, the soft, elk-leather, beautifully painted lodge lining smoothed out until it hadn't a single wrinkle in its entire length; and last, they had thrown back the lodge skin from each side of the doorway poles, to permit the photographer to obtain a



BEGINNING OF THE BUFFALO STONE CEREMONY

clear view of the interior. But he didn't come, and our old people began to talk of having the ceremony without him; they said that, when all was prepared, it was offensive to the gods to postpone it. When he did finally arrive, it was two o'clock and the sun was well into the west. Our friend gave one look into the opened lodge, and said that he couldn't photograph the interior unless the lodge was turned straight around to face the sunlight. At that, our old people made great outcry; they said that it could not be done; that the doorways of lodges always faced the east; it would bring bad luck upon them were they to turn it to face the west. Boy Chief alone took no part in the discussion. He had a very gloomy appearance, however, as he sat motionless at the head of his couch, staring absently at the thin wisp of flame and smoke rising from the few sticks in the fireplace. At last, seating myself at his side, I said to him:

"As I see it, there is no sacred object in setting lodges to face the east. They have always been set that way to protect them from the prevailing winds, the west winds —"

"No! They are set that way so as to face Sun when he appears in the morning," Curly Bear's woman interrupted. And he frowned, motioning her to be silent.

"Well, were it as she says," I went on, "that the lodges are set to face Sun, it follows that, at midday, they should be turned to face the west, to face him until he goes behind the mountains; they should then be turned back to the east, to face him when he again appears."

Loudly clapping his hands together, White Dog exclaimed: "Apikuni is right: our lodges face the east, so that the fierce west winds cannot smoke us out of them!"

Boy Chief looked across at Raven Chief and asked: "And what say you to that, you, Thunder Bird Pipe man?"

"I, too, say that Apikuni is right about it: our lodges face the east so that the west winds cannot make the smoke of our lodge fires blind us."

"As you so believe, I wish that you would give my Buffalo Stone ceremony for me."

"Yes, gladly. I go to prepare myself for it. Turn your lodge about," Raven Chief unhesitatingly replied, and hurried away to his lodge.

There was nothing out of the way in Boy Chief's request; for various reasons, the Pikuni Sun priests frequently did this for one another.

The lodge was taken down and soon set up again, facing the west, and the interior furnishings were shifted around, and, his face, hands, and moccasins freshly painted with the sacred, dull-

red ochre, Sun's favorite color, Raven Chief returned and took Boy Chief's place at the back of the lodge. Next to him, on his right, was his woman, and then one after another the other women of our little camp. I sat next to him on his left, then my son, and after him were Curly Bear, White Dog, White Grass, Many Tail Feathers, and the rest of the men, Boy Chief taking his place at the outer end of the row.

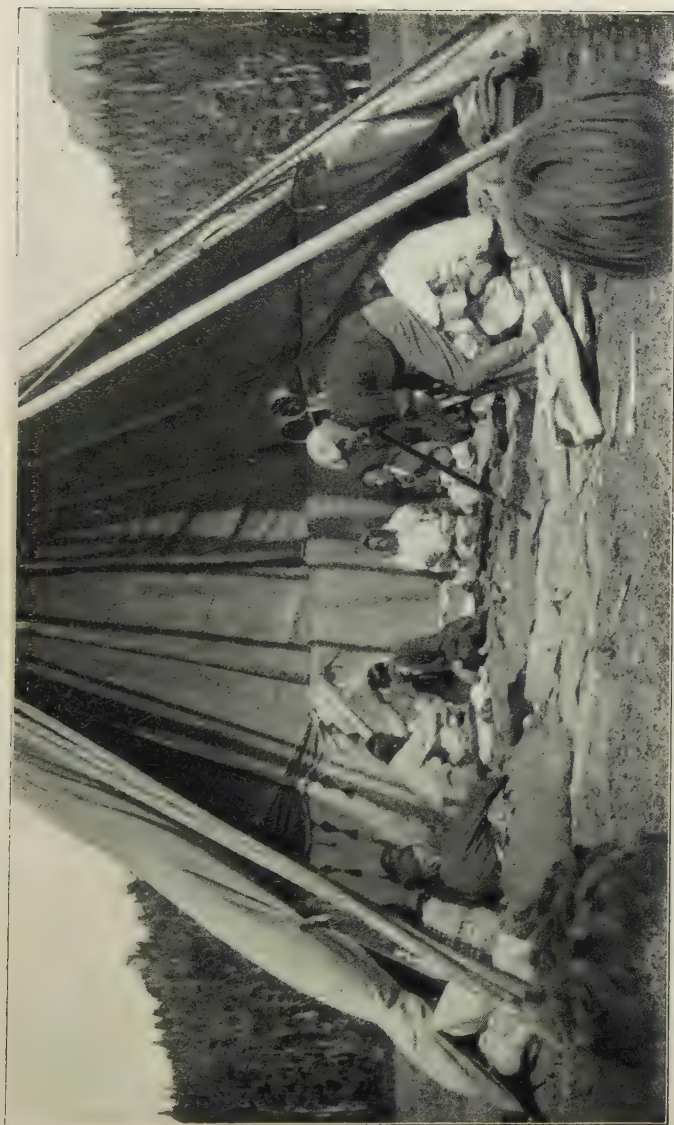
"Kyi! We begin! Sun, and all you Above People; and you, creatures of the earth; and you, creatures of the waters: we pray you all to pity us! Men, women, children, give us all, oh, you powerful ones, full lives!" Raven Chief chanted. And at that, he opened the larger one of two painted leather sacks in front of him and passed out rawhide rattles, one to each man of the row, except my son and me: we were to be painted and take active parts in the ceremony, and they, and the row of women opposite them, were to be the soksini'iks (heavy singers).

Next, Raven Chief took up a pair of red-painted wooden tongs, and with them took several coals from the fire, made a little pile of them in front of the other leather sack, and, dropping upon them some powdered sweet grass, he purified himself in the smoke that rose from it, and began the opening song of the ceremony, the

men and women singing it with him, and the former beating time to it with their rattles. It was a song without words, deep-toned, slow, solemn, heart-gripping. It ended, and, now purified by the sweet grass smoke, Raven Chief began another song, singing it alone, and, opening the sack, took from it, one by one, seven leather-wrapped objects and set them before him. Still singing, he unwrapped the smallest one of the seven, and exposed a buffalo-shaped red stone about two inches in length, and set it up on its smoothed-out wrapping, to the left of the little pile of coals; and, pausing, he said to me: "That is he, the Buffalo Stone that Mink Woman found, and with it brought back the buffaloes and saved the people from starvation."

Singing again, he unwrapped the six larger objects and set them in a row close in front of his crossed knees; they were fossil joints of a sea plant of the carboniferous age, and the largest of the kind that I had ever seen. I had picked up several of small size in the bad lands of the Missouri, and a friend had told me the Latin name for the plant, but I had long since forgotten it. The fossil joints have very much the shape of a buffalo. These averaged all of six inches in length, and were colored with the sacred red paint.

Again opening his paint sack, the old man



THE BUFFALO STONE CEREMONY: RAVEN CHIEF PAINTING LONE WOLF

motioned me to sit closer to him, and he then painted my hair, face, and hands, at the same time praying Sun, Buffalo Stone, and all the gods of the sky, earth, and waters, to pity me and keep safe from all danger, and to help me to attain old age. He then seized my right wrist with his right hand, and his woman, representing the finder of the sacred stone, seized his wrist with her right hand, and he began another song in which all present joined, low and slow at first, and gradually increasing in time and volume to a fierce pæan of triumph, the women occasionally shrilly voicing the war-cry; and in time to the song, our united hands went out over the sacred stones, forth and back and forth and back many times, until the old man told me to seize the chief of them. I lifted it, the singing suddenly ceased, and, our hands still united by our wrist-holds, we smoothed my head and breast with the stone, and he bade me pray: "Pity me, sacred Buffalo Stone! Help me to survive all dangers, to live to extreme old age." I did so, and, with my wrist still gripped, I replaced the stone, and with loud shouts of triumph by the assemblage, and staccato pounding of rattles, my wrist was released, and my part in the ceremony ended. I exchanged seats with my son, and the ceremony was repeated in all its details for him.

It is difficult for me to explain my feelings during the ceremony. Although I have no faith in anything after this life, still, I was deeply affected by it; the earnest, unquestioning faith of my old friends in the power and beneficence of the Buffalo Stone, strong with power of Sun, the supreme ruler as they believe, and crowding memories of our wanderings upon the buffalo plains in the years of our youth brought tears to my eyes, and I was not ashamed of them. I did not like to ask my son how he felt about it all, but I heard him say, in reply to a question by our photographer friend: "Well, we can see the sun; it gives us light and heat, makes all plants grow; it is something tangible: I would rather look to it for help than to the gods of any other faith."

Although my account of the ceremony is brief, it lasted all of three hours; many long and set prayers were made, and many songs sung that I have not mentioned.

CHAPTER XII

*Many Tail Feathers tells us of a Terrible Enemy and how he fulfilled
his Sun Vow to kill him*

September 3

YESTERDAY, when we got up and went outside for a look around at the mountains, red with the first rays of the sun, we discovered a band of big-horn ewes and lambs upon the lower slope of Rising Wolf Mountain, and, above them, three very large goats. We were out of meat and the sight of them made our old friends' mouths water.

"Haiya! There they are, so near, so easy to approach and kill, and we may not do it!" White Grass exclaimed.

"If we return to the foot of the lower lake, we can have real-food; there, upon our own land, Lone Wolf and his woman, and maybe Crow Feathers, can hunt and kill it for us," said Many Tail Feathers.

"True. Then why camp longer here? Let's go down there; now, this morning," Curly Bear proposed.

"If not real-food, down there we can, anyhow, have spotted fish and smoke-color birds,"¹ said

¹ Trout and grouse.

one of the women; and then all said that they were eager to return to the other camp-ground. So, right after our early morning meal, down came the lodges, the horses were saddled and packed, the travois set in place and loaded, and we headed down the trail. By noon we were again encamped at the foot of the lower lake. We had both trout and grouse for our evening meal.

Said Many Tail Feathers to me this afternoon, as we all sat out on the lake shore, idly smoking: "How long ago was it, Apikuni, that summer you left your fort on Bear River, and moved up on to this Two Medicine Lodges River?"

"Thirty-nine winters back," I replied.

He referred to the time when I had left Fort Conrad, on the Marias River, and moved up on to the reservation, there to make my home.

"A long time ago. It was then that I killed our great enemy, White Dog, the Assiniboine. Perhaps you remember that, upon my way with my war party to hunt again for him, I brought them to your fort, one morning, and you gave us six boxes of cartridges, some tobacco, sugar, and tea?"

"No, I don't remember. I have forgotten so many of the happenings of that long-ago time. I do remember that you killed that enemy, for I heard you count your *coup* upon him, at Sun's

Lodge, in the following summer. But tell us all about your quest of him."

"Yes. Tell it; all of it; nothing is so good as our old tales of war; of brave deeds accomplished," old White Grass urged.

"Well, then, I will tell it. The beginning of my hatred of the Assiniboinés, more than all others of our enemies, was far back. When I was in my tenth summer, the Pikuni moved from Big River, to hunt for a time in the Wolf Mountains, and there we made camp beside the creek that flows from the east end of them, down across the plain to Big River. There, one morning, my father, with seven of his friends, went out to hunt. At the middle of the day, one of them, wounded and bloody, came riding back into camp upon his winded, stumbling horse, crying out to us: 'We were surprised by some Assiniboinés! They ambushed us, killed all but me! Harry, you Pikuni fighters, avenge their deaths!'

"Ha! What commotion there was then: women and children mourning for their dead; men shouting to one another as they hurried to run in their horses, and saddle and mount them. Away they all went, led by the wounded one, to fight the enemy, and some of us, a slower party, followed to bring in our dead. We found them, scalped and mangled, in the mouth of a narrow, brushy

little canyon. Then bitterly my mother and all the other women cried, and I did, too, as I looked upon the remains of my father, and helped wrap the body in soft robes and place it upon a travois, to be brought to camp for tree burial. Our warriors, meantime, trailed the enemy up into the heavy timber of the mountain-side, and there lost all trace of them. They had abandoned the six horses that they had captured, and taken to the cliffs and broken summit of the mountain, where riders could not follow.

“When we lost my father, my mother and I went to live in the lodge of my uncle, Red Robe. You all remember him, the great warrior that he was, and owner of so many horses that it was difficult to count them. He was very kind to us, very good to my mother — his sister — trying ever to make her cheerful. But always she would say: ‘I have lost my man, my good man. I cannot get over his going.’ She was very good to me, and very watchful of all that I did. Almost every evening she would say to me: ‘Up there at the mouth of Bear River, I saw the Assiniboinés kill your grandfather, my father, Small Arrow, and now they have killed your father. My son, it is for you to avenge them! Make the killing of Assiniboinés the one big thing for you to do. Prepare for it now! Waste not your days in play!

Sit with the old men and listen to their tales, so that you may learn all the ways of the warrior. Frequent the lodges of the Sun men, so that you may learn how to obtain the help of that great traveler across the blue.'

"As my mother talked to me, so did my uncle, but I did not mind them so well as I might have done. I played a great deal with the children of my age.

"In the New Grass moon of the next summer, my mother went to the Sand Hills, there to join my father. Long I mourned over her going. Then it was that I took her advice, then when she could no longer see me. I ceased play; I became a boy-man. I daily herded my uncle's great band of horses; accompanied him upon his hunts; passed the evenings with him and his friends, listening carefully to all their talk of war; and, in my seventeenth summer, I went to war with him as his servant, his pipe-bearer. We had good success against the Crows. I went with him, in following summers, against the Assiniboines, always as his servant, and holder of the horses that he and his men would bring out to me from the enemy camp. Then, in my twentieth summer, my uncle told me that the time had come for me to try to get a sacred helper. I took his advice. I went to the top of a cliff, near our camp on Yellow River,¹ and

¹ Judith River.

there fasted and prayed for a revealing vision. I got it. On my fourth night there — sacred number — I saw in my sleep a certain water animal approaching me. It came close, and, after we had talked together for a time, it promised to be my lifelong helper. I awoke. I was happy feeling. Though day had not come, I went home and told my uncle that I had had a wonderful vision, that a powerful water animal was to be my helper. Well, from that time my servant days were over. Thereafter, I went to war, a warrior myself.

“I kept ever in mind, what my mother had so often impressed upon me, that it was for me to avenge the death of my father and my grandfather, but, like others of my age and experience, I had to follow wherever our war chiefs led, and they led us against the Crows, and the tribes upon the other side of the Backbone-of-the-World, more often than they did the Assiniboines, killers of my fathers.

“Came a summer when, after trading our winter take of robes and furs to the Many Houses Fort men,¹ we went west and camped on Big River where Point-of-Rocks River joins it.² From there, one day, a party of our people went up the smaller river, to camp and trap beaver for

¹ Fort Benton.

² Sun River.

a few nights. Upon the following day, some of them came back to us with terrible news. During the night, their little camp had been attacked by a large party of Assiniboines, and six of their men and three of their women and two children had been killed, and all their horses run off. And during the attack upon them, one of the enemy had kept shouting, 'I am White Dog, Assiniboine!' (Nistoa Apiom'ita, Assinah'kwan!)"

"I was there. I was one of those beaver trappers. I heard that one shout, over and over, 'I am White Dog, Assiniboine!'" White Grass exclaimed.

"True! You were there! I remember!" said Many Tail Feathers, and continued:

"We mounted our best horses, several hundreds of us, and went in pursuit of the enemy, but lost all trace of them in a great rainstorm that lasted three days and nights, and we returned to camp. There, with the constant mourning for the dead, there was much talk about the one who had shouted, 'I am White Dog, Assiniboine!' We wondered how he could have learned the words? No Assiniboine had ever lived with us, and, so far as we knew, no members of our tribe or our brother tribes were captives in the camp of the Assiniboines.

"Kyi! In the following, the Berries Ripe moon,

one of our war parties, trailing along the foot of the Bear Paws Mountains, came face to face with a war party of Assiniboines, and, in the fight that ensued, one of them, their leader, kept shouting: 'I am White Dog, Assiniboine!' Three of our party and seven of the enemy were dead, when the surviving enemy, about twenty of them, began to retreat up the mountain-side, their leader, White Dog, going last, and pausing often to say to our men, in the sign language: 'Out of ammunition, I go. I am powerful. You cannot kill me. Your shots cannot pierce my body. You Pikuni shall see me again. I shall continue fighting you. I shall kill many of you!' And again he would shout, at the same time beating his breast, 'I am White Dog, Assiniboine!'

"It seemed to be true, his boast that he was powerful, that bullets could not pierce his body, for, though the Pikuni fired again and again at him, with most careful aim, they failed to hit him. Up the steep slope a little way was the great forest of pines, running to the top of the mountain, and when he and his party entered it, the Pikuni turned and went their way, for, in the protection of the trees and brush, the enemy would have surely killed them all had they persisted in continuing the fight.

"Now, when this party of our warriors re-

turned to us and told about their encounter with White Dog, I felt more strongly than ever that I was a useless, a nothing-man. I was not fulfilling my promise to my mother, that I would avenge my father and grandfather, make the killing of Assiniboinés the main object of my life. But was I so very much to blame? I was not yet considered sufficiently experienced to lead a party against the enemy. I had to follow our war chiefs wherever they chose to go; and, as I have said, they went mostly against the Crows and the West-Side tribes.

“As winter drew near, our chiefs counseled together and decided that we should pass it in the Yellow River country, and that, upon our way there, we should go to Many Houses Fort, and trade what beaver and other furs and skins we had for plenty of powder and balls and cartridges and other things that we needed. When we arrived at the fort and made camp just below it, my uncle and I went in to visit my aunt, my mother’s sister, who, as you know, was Sleeping Thunder’s¹ — the chief trader’s — woman. She prepared a little feast for us, and, just as it was

¹ Sistsikum Aiokat (Sleeping Thunder) was Major George Steel, who became a clerk of the American Fur Company at its Fort Benton post, in 1858, and in 1865, with Matthew Carroll, bought the fort when the great Company went out of business on the Upper Missouri.

ready, Sleeping Thunder came in and we ate together and exchanged news. We told him about our Assiniboine enemy, White Dog, and, clapping his hands together, he exclaimed: 'I can tell you how he learned those Pikuni words! This past summer, Fox Eyes,¹ whom you know, came up here on the last fire-boat to get more goods from me for his trade with the Assiniboines, and he told me about this White Dog. He said that the man came into his fort with two fine buffalo robes, and offered to give them to him if he would teach him to say in Pikuni, "I am White Dog! Assiniboine!"

"Fox Eyes asked him why he wanted to know the words, and the man replied that he was going to lead a party to the camp of the Pikuni, to offer to make a peace treaty with them, and he wanted to be able to shout out to them his name, and the name of his tribe, when he approached their camp. Then Fox Eyes told him that he wanted no pay for teaching him the words for that good use, and repeated them, over and over, until the man could speak them perfectly. He then, this White Dog, traded the two robes for gun-food and tobacco, and, upon leaving, he said to Fox Eyes: "Because you and the Pikuni are good friends, I lied to you. I now tell you the truth. I

¹ Murray Nicholson.

wanted to learn those words so that when I attack the Pikuni, they shall know who it is that wipes out their lives. In the darkest night, they shall hear me shout, as I kill them, 'I am White Dog, Assiniboine!'"

"““They will wipe out your life, and soon!” Fox Eyes told him.

"““They will not,” White Dog answered. “I had a powerful dream. My dream person told me that he would protect my body from the arrows and the bullets of the Pikuni, so I shall war against them always.”

"“Said Fox Eyes to him: “White Dog, you are a mean female-dog-face! I hope that the Pikuni will soon kill you. Go, now, out of my fort, and don’t ever again come into it, for, no matter what you offer me, you shall have no more of the things in this trade room!”

"“And said White Dog, as he went out the door: “I shall have all of your trade goods that I need; my friends will trade my robes and furs for me!”

"“There! That is what I know about your Assiniboine enemy,’ Sleeping Thunder ended.

"“And a terrible enemy he is,’ cried my aunt.

"“Sleeping Thunder,’ said I, ‘help me. My powder and ball gun is not a good shooter; let me have one of your many-shots guns,⁴ and, when

¹ Forty-four caliber, rim-fire, Henry repeating rifle.

summer comes and we return here, I will pay you for it.'

"'Yes,' he answered.

"'No!' cried my aunt. 'I know what you want it for, nephew. You intend to seek this White Dog. You must not! You are not old enough, you are not experienced enough, to go against this powerful enemy!'

"'It is not for you to say that, you, my mother's sister,' I answered. 'The Assiniboines first killed my grandfather, then my father, and my mother died of grief for him. You know — you well know — how often she told me that I must avenge their deaths. The time has come for me to do it. If only I can kill this White Dog —'

"'Give him a many-shots gun,' she told her man. And then to me, 'I shall constantly pray Sun to protect you!' she said, and, crying, went from us into her sleeping-room and shut its door.

"Said Sleeping Thunder: 'In the trade room are twenty many-shots guns.' Go there with me, and take your choice of them.'

"Kyi! We moved out to Yellow River and camped upon it well down its length, not a half-day's ride from its junction with Big River. All around us there, the plain was black with buf-faloes, but, as we kept hunting them, they, of

course, moved back and farther back from our camp, until, after a couple of moons, we had to ride out and camp for a night, and sometimes two nights, to make a good killing of them.

"Came a night when my uncle's women said to him and to me: 'You two will soon have to go hunting; we have not enough real-food to last two more days.'

"'Good! We will go out to-morrow, and you women shall go, too. We will try to get others to go with us,' my uncle replied, and went out to ask some of our friends to join us.

"We made an early start, the next morning, Heavy Runner, Weasel-in-the-Bunch, and Running Rabbit, their women going with us. Traveling east, we did not sight buffaloes, other than small bands of bulls, until we arrived at It-Crushed-Them Creek; there, we could see great herds of them in all directions grazing upon the plain.

"We had brought with us one lodge. The women set it up, while we men hobbled our many horses so that they would not stray far during the night, and we did not picket our fast buffalo runners close to the lodge, for it was midwinter and very cold, a time when enemy war parties were not likely to be traveling about upon the plains. With my many-shots gun I killed an elk,

a fat young cow that came out of the timber and stopped and stared at us, and, by the time we had butchered it and brought in the meat, night had come. We ate plenty, sang many times the Wolf Song, for good luck on the hunt, and went to sleep.

"We arose just before day. As soon as it was light, we went out to look at our horses, and found them grazing and resting close by. We had some broiled elk meat and waited then for Sun to travel a little way up into the blue before getting upon our horses and starting out to make a run of a herd. While we waited, Heavy Runner went up the slope of the little valley, looked out upon the plain, and hurried back to tell us that a very large herd of buffaloes were standing, all humped up by the cold, to the north of us, and close to the rim of the valley. We could, he said, ride right in among them before they could start to run from us. We were soon mounted and going down the valley, the women all trailing us with their pack-horses and travois horses.

"After a time, Heavy Runner said to us, 'Here we turn up the slope. Have your guns ready, for the herd is resting very close to the top of it.'

"Up we went, riding slowly and all abreast, but, before we got to the top, our fast runners smelled the buffaloes and we had hard work to

hold them in, so eager were they for the chase. Up and up we mounted, until we could look over the rim of the plain, and then our hearts beat fast: we were so near the herd that we could see the eyes of those that stood facing us. Several of the cows thrust up their heads, stared at us, and turned to run, and at that my uncle said to us: 'Now! Ride fast!'

"Up over the rim we went and right into the herd, and with my many-shots gun I killed three fat cows before my horse had to begin running his best to keep up with the frightened animals. Upon each side of me, I saw the other hunters shooting their powder and ball guns, but the thunder and rattle of the hooves of the great herd was so loud that I could not hear their shots. One after another, I singled out fat cows, my horse took me up beside them, and, when I fired, down they went, or stopped and staggered and later fell. I rode after a two winters' cow, very fat, and by that time my horse was becoming winded and slowing up. I urged him to go faster and he was gaining upon her, when he put his foot into a prairie-dog hole and down we went, and I was as one dead.

"When I came back to life my head pained me terribly; blood was running from a stone cut in the top of it, and my uncle's sits-beside-him

woman was putting snow upon the wound. All of the other men and their women were gathered around me; they had feared that I was dead, and were glad that I was recovering from my fall. I saw my horse standing close by, unhurt. I got upon my feet and staggered to a near dead cow and sat down upon her. Said my uncle to me: 'That is good; you rest there, and we will butcher your kills for you.' And to the others he said, 'We will begin our work here, at this end of our run.'

"Looking back toward the rim of the plain, I counted twenty-three buffaloes lying upon the snow, and one big cow still standing, badly wounded; she suddenly sank upon her haunches, then her forefeet gave way, and she fell over upon her side and died. Of the twenty-four of them, I had killed nine. I was more than ever pleased with my many-shots gun. I felt that I should be helping the others butcher, instead of sitting there watching them. I got up and started toward them, but became so weak and dizzy that I had to sit down again upon the cow; and then I began to tremble with the terrible cold of the morning.

"Five of the cows had been skinned, their tongues and dorsal ribs cut out and tied for packing, when, happening to turn and look to the east,

I saw a party of riders, nine of them, suddenly come from behind a near pine-topped little butte, one of the many such little buttes that there rise above the great plain.

“‘Enemies in sight and coming!’ I cried to the others. And they were coming fast and singing their battle song.

“‘Assiniboines! Friends, fight them the best you can! You women, lie down behind these buffalo bodies! Lie flat! Don’t move; spread your robes over you!’ my uncle shouted, and crouched low behind a cow as did the other men. And there were our fine saddle-horses, our many pack-horses and travois horses, standing all in a close bunch and untethered; the enemy would surely get them, I thought.

“They were now almost upon us, singing their battle song, brandishing their guns, quirting their horses to faster speed, and we saw that it was their intention to shoot at us as they passed close upon our south side, and stampede our horses out that way from us. Their leader was riding a small horse, and he was so tall that his legs hung far below its belly. He kept motioning his followers to come on faster, and then, suddenly, he shouted to us: ‘I am White Dog, Assiniboine!’ Hai! That made my heart beat fast! Here he was, our terrible enemy, and I was glad! Glad! If only I

could kill him! I said to myself: 'Don't shoot until he is close in front of you!' And I said, too, 'O little Water Animal! You, my helper, help me now!'

"The nine were now almost opposite us, their leader constantly shouting, 'I am White Dog, Assiniboine!' the others singing their battle song. I saw that this White Dog had a very fierce appearance; a nose very large and of the shape of an eagle's beak. I was protected, except head and shoulders, by the cow upon which I had been sitting. He fired at me and missed, and then I fired at him — and missed! I was trembling so with the cold and so weak from my fall that I couldn't take good aim at him. But I kept shooting at him — and kept missing his long slim body! One behind him fell from his horse, and I heard Heavy Runner shout 'I killed him!' Another one went down, his back broken by my uncle's shot. And then, at last, my shot hit White Dog! — broke his right arm and his gun dropped from his useless hand! And again I fired, whoom! — and down went his horse with my bullet in its heart. White Dog struck the ground standing, and ran after his men, who were passing him, crying out to them, and one stopped and helped him get up behind. Try as I would, I could hit neither of them nor the helper's horse. Away they went,

straight out south from us, and, turning away from our horses, the others followed them. So long as they were within range of my many-shots gun, I kept shooting at them, but never once made a hit. Oh, I was angry at myself for being so weak and trembly!

"We watched the seven disappear behind one of the little buttes. My uncle finished his enemy, and the women came crowding around us, kissing their men, shouting their names in praise. Several of them even kissed me, and my uncle's sits-beside-him woman — always a mother to me — brought me the gun that White Dog had dropped when my shot broke his arm. It was a brass-mounted, North Traders'¹ gun, a flintlock gun. I said to her, 'It is of no use to me, but I will keep it, and some day tie its owner's scalp to it.' She laughed, and said that she was sure I would.

"We had no fear that the enemy would again attack us during the day, so we finished skinning our kills of buffalo and went to camp with all the hides and all of the choicest parts of the meat that the horses could carry. But we were not going to risk losing our horses in the coming night, so, after eating, we packed our lodge and bedding, and, just at set of Sun, struck out for home. We arrived in the big camp soon after Sun again ap-

¹ Hudson's Bay Company.

peared, and entered it singing the Victory Song. The people crowded around us, and, learning what we had done, praised our names.

“During that day I was invited to more chiefs’ lodges to feast and smoke than I had been before in all my life. I saw that, by wounding White Dog and taking his gun, I was now considered a real warrior. During the following night I thought heavily, prayed to my sacred helper and to Sun, and decided that I would do that which I should long before have done. So, in the morning, I put on my fine war clothes and painted myself with sacred paint, and then, walking about in the great camp, I made a vow in sight and hearing of all the people. I cried to Sun that, beginning with the New Grass moon of the coming summer, I would seek White Dog, the Assiniboine, and keep seeking him and no other enemy until I could find and kill him or he kill me. And all along my way, men told me to have constant thought of my vow and courage, and I would succeed in counting *coup* upon the Assiniboine; and women cried that they would pray Sun to make my enemy mine.

“But that was not all that happened to me that day. As I was sitting with my uncle’s sits-beside-him woman, all the others having gone out, she said to me: ‘Now that you have done

this with your many-shots gun, saved us from the Assiniboine war party and wounded their chief, why not let me go to her father and mother and ask them to give her to you?’

“‘Who?’

“‘And you ask, Who! Don’t think that we are blind! How many, many times we have watched you looking at her and she at you, talking to each other with your eyes! Spear Woman, of course!’

“And I had thought that none knew I cared for her. I had long wanted her, but her father, Low Horn, was so rich and so proud that I had believed it useless for poor me to ask for his daughter.

“‘I know that she has herself tanned and put aside eighteen buffalo cow leathers for her lodge,’ my almost-mother urged.

“‘But not for her and me. I am not rich enough to become Low Horn’s son-in-law,’ I said.

“Without another word to me she went out. I kept listening for her returning footsteps. She did not come. My heart went down. I gave up hope. I said to myself that I should have known that Low Horn would not listen to talk of me. And then I heard a slight rustling: the doorway curtain was being slowly thrust aside, as though the one there was too timid to enter. I saw a dish of food, held by a small hand and rounded arm,

and then came in Spear Woman, slowly, and then, with a sudden run, she set the dish before me. Oh, wasn't I glad-feeling!

"'You!' I cried.

"'Yes! My mother and your almost-mother are right now laying out my cow leathers, to cut them to shape and sew them together for your lodge and mine!' she answered, so low that I could barely hear her, and she was gone before I could say more. My friends, you, too, have had that experience; you remember how you felt when the one you wanted came to you, bearing a dish of food, the sign that she was to be your woman. Oh, those days of our youth, my friends!

"So it was that, on the fourth day thereafter, Spear Woman and I had a lodge of our own; a fine big lodge, well furnished. And I hunted steadily, and kept it, and my uncle's lodge, too, well supplied with meat and hides and furs. Than my woman none of our tribe had more of the fine blankets and pretty things that the white traders sold, so long as the buffaloes lasted."

"Hai yah! Hai yo! Those days of the buffaloes; of our far trails and campings! Why, why couldn't they have lasted!" old White Grass mourned.

"Ai! Why couldn't they!" our little circle chorused.

And sad were their faces, and it was some time before the old warrior resumed his narrative:

“Kyi! When came the New Grass moon, I had our camp crier announce that I was going out in quest of our enemy, White Dog, as I had vowed to do, and many young men, and even gray-haired ones, came to my lodge to say that they wanted to go with me. Even Sun’s men offered to go, with their sacred pipes. I chose one of them, Red Eagle, who then had the Thunder Pipe, and four young men, making six of us altogether. I had thought it all out during the long winter. I was not going to war against the whole tribe of Assiniboines, so I did not want a large party of followers; were we but few, we could slip through the country with good chance of being unobserved, and so be more likely to come upon him I had vowed to kill.

“I led that, my first war party, to Big River, down it for some distance, and thence north to the Hairy Cap,¹ on its summit remaining two days, watching the plain to the north, east, and south, but discovering no signs of the enemy. We then went on to Little River,² and down it, traveling only by night, during the daytime

¹ A pine-tipped, high butte just east of the Little Rocky Mountains, the Wolf Mountains of the Blackfoot tribes.

² Milk River.

hiding in the thickest patches of willows that we could find.

“We had traveled almost to the mouth of Little River when we first discovered the enemy, a large party of them, out after buffaloes, their women trailing after with the pack and travois horses. From our hiding-place we watched the men approach a herd, and run it and make a big killing, and then, when the butchering was finished and all the horses were loaded with meat and hides, saw them head straight toward us. We didn’t like that, but we knew that we had but one thing to do: remain right where we were in the willows; we could not possibly leave our hiding-place without being discovered. Right in front of us, and so near that we could plainly hear them talk, they unloaded their horses and set up their lodges, and then, when the women came into the timber after firewood, we feared that our end was near. One of the women came straight toward us, and we were sure that she was going to see us and cry out and run. We hardly dared breathe. The man next me on my right whispered, ‘What shall we do if she sees us?’

“‘What can we do but fight until we are killed?’ our Sun’s man replied.

“And just then, another woman, farther up the grove, called to her, and she turned and joined

her, and we breathed easier. Night was coming on. No other woman approached us, and we were soon safe from discovery.

"Said our Sun's man: 'The gods are with us; we have escaped great danger. And now, what shall we do?'

"Let me first go into the camp and try to find the one I have vowed to kill. If you hear me shoot, run for your lives. If I fail to find him, I will return if I am not discovered, and we will then decide what next to do,' I answered.

"With my gun under my robe, and it well wrapped about me and concealing my face below my eyes, I went right into that camp of twenty-six lodges, and walked about in it, and stood here and there, listening for the voice of White Dog, until I was sure that he was not in the camp. I then returned to my men, and proposed that we go on down the river to the main camp of the enemy.

"They strongly objected, however, to going farther: 'Here, right before us are plenty of Assiniboine horses, ours for the taking, so why go on to the main camp?' they asked.

"Because of my vow. I must find that White Dog, and kill him,' I explained.

"You can come again to seek him; this chance for us to take a fine band of horses is too good for

us to pass; we must take them,' they replied: all but our Sun's man, Red Eagle, who did not speak.

"‘We will leave it to him, our Sun's man, what we shall do,' I said.

"They agreed to that, and said he:

"‘I have the feeling that the one you seek is not in the big camp below. I have had no vision of any kind; I cannot explain why I so feel; maybe my sacred helper has put the thought into me. And, anyhow, you are young; you have plenty of time to seek and seek for this White Dog until you find him. And you now have a lodge of your own, and you are very poor; you should acquire wealth, so that you can pay others to look after your woman and your uncle, who will soon be unable to hunt, while you are away from them, trying to fulfill your vow.’

"‘That is good advice. We will take these horses,' I replied.

"We did take them. When morning came, that camp of Assiniboinés found themselves afoot and we were well on our way home. We dropped out the poor and slow animals, and arrived there with more than two hundred head, which we divided equally among ourselves.

"And there, bad news awaited us: Three days before, White Dog, with a party of his Assiniboinés, had attacked a small party of our people,

out hunting buffaloes, and killed four of them, one man, two women, and a young boy, and, shouting as he always did, 'I am White Dog, Assiniboine!' he had signed to the survivors of the little party, even while they were shooting at him: 'I am powerful! Your bullets cannot pierce my body!' But that, I knew, was a lie: one of my bullets had broken his arm.

"Said Red Eagle to me when we heard this: 'I was right in that I thought; my sacred helper did warn me that White Dog was not in the camp below.'

"Kyi! We moved back to Many Houses Fort, to trade, and I paid Sleeping Thunder ten good horses for the many-shots gun that he had let me take on debt to him. And then I said to him: 'When you see our friend, Fox Eyes, this summer, tell him to tell White Dog, the Assiniboine, that I, Many Tail Feathers, am the man who broke his arm, and that I have vowed to Sun to kill him, that I shall keep seeking him until I find him, and count *coup* upon his mean body!'

"He got my message, as I learned in the following winter, and his reply to Fox Eyes was: 'I am the one who will do the killing. Never was a Pikuni born who can kill me.'

"My friends, you all remember how it was with us: we were free to go and to keep going upon

many and far trails until we got lodges of our own; then, when children came, and we had them to feed, and, some of us, also old relatives to keep supplied with meat and hides, it was seldom that we could find time to go out upon a war trail. At first, I went in quest of White Dog at least once in every summer; then came summers now and then when I could not possibly leave my lodge and the lodge of my uncle to the care of others. But I never laid aside my vow; I sought my enemy whenever I could go away for a moon or more, but never did I find him. And we heard less and less of him: some summers, nothing at all, and then, again, when least expected, he would fall upon straggling hunters of our people, always with his boastful cry, 'I am White Dog, Assiniboine!' kill one or more of them, and escape unharmed. Well, I pass over those many, many summers of my quest of him, and come to the time when, at last, I found him. It was, as Apikuni says, thirty-nine summers back!

"You all remember how terrible was the winter previous to that summer, the buffaloes killed off, and our people dying from want of food. Then, in the New Grass moon, came plenty of food for us all, sent by the Great Father, and I saw that my woman and children and my uncle's women — he was dead — would be well fed, and I could

go once more in search of my enemy. We started, six of us, each with a many-shots gun — and no cartridges! But I told my men that, when we arrived at Apikuni's fort, he would give us some. He did! A box to each of us, and we went with strong hearts upon our way. Down Bear River to its mouth; then out across the plain to the Bear Paws; down along the Wolf Mountains to the Hairy Cap; and then on to Little River, and then down it by night, for, somewhere along its lower length, we were sure that we should find the camp of the Assiniboines.

“During our second night of travel, some rain fell, and when it ceased, at dawn, there was heavy fog in the valley. We stopped for the day in the upper end of a long narrow grove of cottonwoods, with here and there undergrowth of willows. We were very wet and cold, and my men wanted to build a fire, but I would not allow it. I told them to rest in a patch of willows, close to which we were standing, and that I would go upon discovery down to the lower end of the grove and soon return to them. I was very uneasy. I felt that I must go down there. Afterward, I knew that it was my sacred helper that put that urge into me.

“I went on very slowly, keeping well within the edge of the grove and looking out, often stop-

ping behind a big tree to look out past it and watch and listen. I had gone but a very little way from my men, not two hundred steps, when I saw, dim in the heavy fog, a lone man coming slowly up the bottom, and a little way out from the grove. As he came nearer, I saw that he was very tall and slender, and the thought struck me that he might be my enemy, White Dog. He was wearing a white blanket capote, the hood of it drawn up over his head, and he was going from patch to patch of rosebrush, with gun half-extended, looking for rabbits. Nearer and nearer he came, until, when quite close, he turned his face my way, and, oh, how my heart jumped when I saw that he was White Dog! Yes, White Dog himself! I was standing breast against a big tree, just peeking out past it with one eye, and, as he came on and on, I kept slipping around the trunk so that he would not discover me. And then, when he was straight out from me, I slowly moved out from the tree, aimed my gun at him, and shouted to him his own war cry, 'I am White Dog, Assiniboine!' And as he straightened up with a jerk of his long body, saw me, and was raising his gun to aim at me, I fired at him, and with a terrible roar of pain, down he went, flat upon his stomach, his arms outstretched. As I started toward him, my men came running out

and were first to reach his side. I joined them, said to them, 'It is he, my enemy! I have fulfilled my vow!' We looked down upon him, thought him dead, and one, my old war trail partner, Heavy Runner, said to me: 'Get out your knife! Scalp him.'

"I don't want it. I'll take his gun, count *coup* upon him with it,' I replied.

"Then I will have his scalp,' said he, and, stooping over, he cut through to the bone all around the edge of the hair growth, and then, loosening the scalp behind an ear, with one fierce jerk ripped it from the head. At that, he who we thought dead gave a terrible cry and sat up, the skin of his forehead dropping down over his eyes and concealing them. With both hands, he raised it and looked at us — a fearful sight he was — and as he stared at me, I shouted to him, and at the same time signed: 'White Dog! I, Many Tail Feathers, many winters and summers I looked for you, now I have shot you, and you die!'

"I think that he understood. I have always hoped that he did. But maybe he didn't, for I had no more than said that to him than he fell over upon his side, and was wholly dead.

"Then, as we had suspected, we saw that he had not been alone: a number of his followers

were coming down into the valley from the plain, running toward us. We threw ourselves flat upon the ground, and, when they were near, began firing at them. Two fell, and the rest ran down into the shelter of the timber. We did not pursue them, for we thought that their camp might not be far off, and that we should soon have all of the Assiniboine warriors after us. We took the weapons and scalps of the two, and went back up the river until we came to a big coulee, and then went up to the head of it and hid there until night, when we went straight south to Big River, and there had a good rest. We saw no more of the enemy, and in time arrived safely home.

“So, at last, did I fulfill my vow.”

CHAPTER XIII

*How Apsi and I found, and lost, Old Back-in-Sight
in the Long-ago*

September 11

THE time is near when we must separate, our old friends to return to their bleak cabins, we to trail back into the Always-Summer land. For some days, black wind clouds have hidden the summit of the range, and yesterday came the first snow of the season; the mountains are white with it this morning.

We have had more real-food — fat elk and deer meat; and all the trout and grouse that we could use. And from near and far, old friends have come to partake of our feasts, and sit with us around our evening lodge fires and talk of adventures in the long-ago.

Said Curly Bear, last night: "When Cold-Maker comes down upon us from the North, as he soon will, with his terrible winds and snow, how ever present in our thoughts will be the happy days that we have passed here, and how deeply we shall mourn the all-too-soon passing of them!"

"Ai! That we will!" our little circle cried.

Among others who came to pass a night with us was an old friend, a member of the Canadian Blood — Kaina — tribe of the Blackfeet Confederacy, with whom I had many an adventure in the days of our youth. His name then was Apsi (Arrow). Later on, after a raid upon the Assiniboines, in which he counted three *coups* upon the enemy, he took the name which he still bears, Stum'iks Otokaw'pi (Bull Turns Around).

In the summer of 1880, when the late Joseph Kipp and I built our trading post on the Missouri, thirty miles above the mouth of the Musselshell, the Bloods and the Blackfeet, as they had agreed to do, came down from Canada, to camp and hunt in our vicinity and trade their buffalo robes and furs to us. With the Bloods were Apsi, a youth of my own age, and his widowed mother and his sister. He and I had been good friends before this time, having often hunted together in the Judith country; and now, instead of going out upon the plains with his tribe, to follow the buffalo herds, he decided to set up his lodge in the heavy timber in which our post was located, and hunt and trap from there. As herds of buffaloes frequently came down into our bottom during the winter, he kept his lodge well supplied with meat and all the hides that his mother and sister could tan; and with his traps caught a large number

of the beavers that inhabited the river-banks. Whenever I could get away from our trade room, I hunted with him, but that was not often; parties from the two big camps were almost daily coming in to exchange their robes and furs for our goods. I chafed at my close confinement.

Came March, and warm days, and honking and chattering and trumpeting of the geese and swans flying northward gave me a longing for the out-of-doors that I could not resist: "I'm going out for a few days; out to the head of Little Rocky Creek to catch some trout," I said to Kipp, one evening.

"Better not. War parties will soon be abroad," he advised.

"Too early for them. I'll chance it; get Apsi to go with me," I replied.

I found Apsi eager to go: "I'll take my traps; catch beavers while you fish," he said.

"You will remain right here! I will not let you go out there, to be killed by some enemy war party!" his mother declared.

However, in the face of her protests and Kipp's, we started out the next morning, taking our camp outfit across the river in a skiff, and swimming our riding-horses and pack-horse. It was only about thirty miles out to the foot of the east end of the Little Rockies. We arrived there just be-

fore sundown, and looked about in the little valley of the creek for a place to make camp. The sky had clouded over, threatening rain, and I feared that we were to have a bad night of it: we had brought no shelter of any kind.

Near the east bank of the creek, in a little grove of pines, I found an old war lodge, built of poles, overlaid with bark, but Apsi objected to going into it.

"We know not who built it; most likely some enemy war party, Sioux, Crows, Crees, maybe Cheyennes, and therefore it is no place for us to camp in. There they prayed to their gods, made sacrifices to them, and the power of it all still lingers in the place," he said.

"Well, it looks like rain, and there isn't time before dark to build a shelter. Let's use this one, to-night, and to-morrow, if you insist upon it, we will put up a small lodge," I said.

He reluctantly agreed to that, and we put our little outfit into it, picketed our horses, collected some firewood, and re-covered the side of the lodge where we were to sleep. Rain began to fall as we were preparing our meal of meat, bread, and coffee, but it did not penetrate the repairs that we had made. We ate a lot, smoked three pipes, and were soon asleep.

Apsi awoke me at dawn, by suddenly crying:

"Look out! He is going to shoot!" He was dreaming. I awoke and told him that he had cried that in his sleep, and he was terribly worried because he could not remember his dream. He said that it must, however, have been a warning by his sacred helper that we were in danger, and that we must be on the watch for it. Then, when the sun came up, with a rainbow-hued splash of color upon its either side, he was more than ever depressed: "There! You see, Sun has painted himself; he is warning us that we are in danger! That enemies are approaching us!" he exclaimed.

I foolishly decided to attempt to argue him out of his belief in signs and omens. "We are not the only ones who see that Sun is painted," I said. "The white men, away up in the mining towns in the mountains, those in Many Houses Fort, those scattered along Big River cutting wood for the fire-boats, they all see it. The Crows over on Elk River, the Sioux far to the east, the Crees away north of us, also see it. Now, do you think that Sun is warning all those different peoples that an enemy, or other danger, is approaching them?"

A pitying smile flitted across his face; he hesitated a moment, and then replied: "Probably where they are, they do not see his painting. And

if they do see it, it may not be a sign to them, as it is to us, that we are in danger. We slept in an enemy war house; that was bad for us. I had a warning vision of some kind; still more proof that we are in danger. And now Sun has painted himself, to warn us of it. I pity the whites. Their eyes are blind to many of the helpful signs that we can see, and their shadows, unlike ours, cannot leave their bodies when they sleep and go forth to obtain help from the gods. I don't know why I say all this to you except that I love you very much, and wish that you could obtain this power which all whites seem to lack."

We broiled some meat and made coffee and had a silent meal, Apsi mechanically eating and solemnly staring at the fire. When we had finished, I filled the big pipe, smoked a few whiffs and passed it to him, and he blew smoke to Sun and to Earth-Mother, and prayed them and his sacred helper, Ancient Otter, to preserve us from all danger and give us long and full life. We finished the pipe, and, laying it aside, took up our traps and fishing-tackle and rifles, and started up the creek. We soon came to a string of three ponds which the beavers had made by damming it, and in each of them were several of their lodges, conical mounds of sticks, stones, and mud, rising several feet above the surface of the water. We es-

timated that there were forty or fifty beavers in the colony. As he looked at the plentiful signs of the animals, slide after slide still wet from the passing up and down them of the busy workers during the night, Apsi forgot for the time his gloomy forebodings and began setting his traps. I cut a long slender willow, tied my fish-line and hook to it, baited with a piece of fresh red buffalo meat, and cast out into five or six feet of water and close to a beaver lodge. The instant the bait struck the surface, a dozen or more large hungry trout darted up for it, and I hooked one of them and yanked it out.

"Look! See the big one that I have caught," I cried to Apsi, busy setting a trap at the foot of a slide upon the opposite side of the pond.

As he straightened up at my call, there came to us, from away up the creek, a piercing, melancholy cry as of some one in distress. We stared up in that direction, and then he looked at me meaningly, as much as to say: "I told you so; here is come the trouble that I prophesied."

Again, and after an interval, still again the cry of distress was repeated, and Apsi took up his rifle, crossed the dam, and came up the shore to me.

"What do you think it was?" I asked.

He signed that he didn't know.

"It sounded like the cry of a man in great pain," I said.

"It was more like a woman's cry, but maybe it was the cry of a shadow, the shadow of an enemy who was killed here by some of our warriors."

I shook my head negatively, but knew better than to smile at his suggestion; and with the awful cries still ringing in my ears, I was in no mood to laugh.

"We slept in an enemy war lodge, I had a warning vision, Sun painted himself: I was sure that trouble of some kind was coming upon us," he said.

"Well, what shall we do? Shall we go, leave this good trapping and fishing place, run from the strange cries that we have heard?"

"No. Whatever the danger is, let's not run from it; let's go face it, learn what it is," he bravely answered.

With rifles ready and cocked, we went up the creek, walking very slowly and cautiously, stopping often to look in every direction and listen, and we scrutinized every foot of ground that we covered. We went as much as a mile above the beaver ponds, but we saw no one, and found no tracks other than those of buffaloes, elk, and deer, and one big grizzly's footprints in the mud of a spring.

Said Apsi then: "No war party is up here; if there were, they would have attacked us. No; it is not up here, the danger of which we have been warned. Perhaps the cries we heard were made by a cougar, looking for a mate."

"Maybe so," I agreed, but had my doubts about it.

We returned to the ponds, and while Apsi finished setting his traps, I caught a lot of trout, intending to dry and smoke the most of them. We then went on down to our camp, but Apsi would not again enter the war lodge, and insisted that we pack our outfit and move down the creek to the last of the pines. There we made a pole and brush shelter. We loafed about there during the rest of the day, and went early to bed.

"It must have been a cougar that made the awful cries," said Apsi, as we drew the covers over us.

"My belief is that it was a lost woman," said I.

We had an early breakfast, and, after watering and repicketing our horses, we hurried up to the beaver ponds, and from the six traps that Apsi had set took five beavers, all drowned in deep water, as he had cunningly contrived should be their quick end. We carried them to some distance from the ponds and I helped him skin them, intending, after the greasy work was finished, to

catch more trout for drying, while he reset his traps. He gloated over his fine furred hides as he skillfully plied his knife. Just the five that he had would enable him to provide new blankets and new red cloth gowns for mother and sister, and some few small articles for himself, he said.

We had skinned the last one of the beavers and were about to return to the pond, when again the mournful cry that we had heard on the previous day echoed from rim to rim of the little valley, seeming to come from some place not far above us.

We stared at one another for a long time, and then Apsi said, "Come on; we must find out about this!"

"Yes! This time we must learn who it is. I am sure it is a person," I answered. And just then the cry was repeated, and we knew for sure that it came from the mountain-side above us.

We began climbing up through the thick growth of pines that clothed it, and once more heard the cry, and went more cautiously. It was really a ridge of cliffs, broken in places, that we were climbing, and in a short time we climbed the last one of them. Looking out through the pines at the bare and narrow crest above, there, not thirty yards from us, we saw an old man standing, and looking off upon the great plain stretch-

ing south to the Missouri. He was very tall and emaciated, gray-haired, and was clothed in well-worn leather shirt and leggings and tattered moccasins, and his wrap was an old red blanket. His weapon was a long-barreled, muzzle-loading rifle, and slung from his shoulders were a powder horn and ball pouch. As we watched him, he repeated the cry that we had now so often heard. It seemed to be a word, perhaps a name that he so weirdly shouted, but it was of a language strange to us.

"He is a crazy man," Apsi whispered.

"Yes. Let's shout, and then step out where he can see us," I proposed.

We did that, Apsi shouting to him, "Friend, we come to you!"

But he did not seem to be surprised when he turned and saw us, nor did he raise his rifle to check our advance. We climbed close up to him, and he surprised us by replying to our greeting in good Blackfeet: "How! How! Young men!" And added, "Whence come you? Have you seen my son?"

We answered his questions, and he continued: "It was here upon this creek that we parted. From here, my son and his companions went to raid the Sioux, promising to return to us at this place. We waited for them a long time, my peo-

ple and I, but they did not come, so we moved back to our own country."

"And where is that?" I asked.

"Upon the other side of the Backbone," meaning the Rocky Mountains.

"You are a Flathead? a Pend d'Oreille?"

"No! Kootenai. Surely you must know me, Back-in-Sight. Don't you remember that my woman was sister of your chief, Big Lake, and that we often lived in your camp for two or three winters at a time?"

"No, we do not remember you; we are not old, you see —" Apsi put in.

"No, you young ones would not remember me. My head hurts me. Sometimes I cannot think at all. Then again I remember my son's promise, that he and his war party would return to us, here upon this creek. I wanted my people to move back here and await their coming, but they wouldn't listen to me — they are camped at the Lakes Inside,¹ so I came on alone. I have now been here seven nights, and still my son does not come. Oh, I wish that he would soon appear!"

"Where is your camp?" Apsi asked.

The old man turned and pointed to a small grassy park about a mile up the creek from the beaver ponds: "In that little prairie I picket my

¹ St. Mary's Lakes.

horse to graze in the night-time, and during the day keep him hidden in the timber. I have no lodge, just a shelter of brush," he answered.

"Well, go get your horse and come down and camp with us," I proposed.

"Good! I will do that. It is not pleasant, camping alone," he said, and turned and left us.

We reset the beaver traps, and went down to camp and stretched the five hides, and at noon the old man rode down to us. We admired his horse, a big powerful gray gelding, fat and high-spirited, and he told us that it was a well-trained buffalo runner. The only food that he had was some very poor buffalo meat, and, when we asked him why he didn't have good fat cow meat, he replied that he had so little ammunition for his rifle that he felt obliged to eat to the last mouthful the meat that he had, that of an old bull he had killed away up on Little River, before using another charge of powder and a ball; and he had hoped that, before the poor meat was finished, his son would turn up with plenty of fat cow meat.

Except for his obsession about his son — dead, of course, long years back — the old man was at times sane enough. We remained there on the creek for four more nights after he joined us, and during that time he passed the days sitting up on top of the ridge, watching for his son to appear,

and calling over and over his name; and in the evenings, he entertained us with tales of his far wanderings and adventures in years-long past.

Came our last night in the camp, and, when we told the old man that we would start home in the morning and asked him to go with us, he replied that he thought it best to remain right where he was and keep watching for his son, who would without doubt soon return. However, when we pointed out to him that, with only three or four charges of powder and ball for his rifle, it was unsafe for him to remain there on watch, he reluctantly admitted that we were right, and decided to go in to the river with us and get a good supply of ammunition and hurry back. This, after I had offered to give him all the powder and balls that his horn and his ball pouch would hold.

We made an early start the next morning, our pack-horse loaded with Apsi's catch of thirty-one prime beaver pelts and two sacks of my dried and smoked trout. The pack-horse had for some unaccountable reason become quite lame in a forefoot, so we had to travel slowly. It was difficult for our old Kootenai friend to hold in his high-spirited buffalo runner, and he would frequently give the animal the bit and ride at a swift lope on ahead for a mile or more, then dismount and wait for us to catch up with him.

We had traveled in this manner for perhaps ten miles, and were again about to overtake the old man, sitting on top of a sharp ridge in the plain, when he suddenly sprang to his feet, signed to us, "My son is coming!" and, quickly mounting his horse, was almost instantly out of our sight. We sensed trouble of some kind upon the other side of the ridge. Apsi was leading the pack-horse; I got behind the animal and quirted him until he broke into a fast lope, and we covered the two hundred yards or more to the top of the ridge in no time; and from there saw the old man riding as fast as he could go down the ridge, and straight toward a war party on foot, standing in a close group and watching his swift approach.

"Enemies!" — "Come back!" we shouted to him. But he never heard us, or, if he did, paid no attention to our calls. Shouting over and over his son's name, and repeatedly gesturing the sign for greeting or welcome, he kept straight on, and we abandoned the pack-horse and rode after him, although we were sure that we were too late to save him. We had not gone halfway down the slope when the guns of the enemy boomed and he pitched sideways from his saddle. Then his horse went down, too, and, as one man, the war party ran to count *coup* upon him. At that, Apsi, in the lead, stopped his horse and sprang to

the ground, and I did likewise. Together we opened fire upon the enemy as they massed about the body of the old man. They were a long way from us, all of four hundred yards, but we aimed well over them, and, before we had half-emptied the magazines of our rifles, they were running from us, scattering out like a flock of flushed grouse, all but two, who lay close to the body of our old Kootenai friend.

Then one of the runners began to stagger, and soon fell, and Apsi shouted to me: "Three are dead! We have killed three! Come on, let's run them!"

"No! Nor shall you. They would just lie down flat in the grass and, with sure aim, shoot us as we neared them," I answered.

We continued firing at the fleeing men until we had emptied the magazines of our rifles, and then, while we were refilling them with cartridges from our belts, Apsi said, "You are right; but, anyhow, we can count *coup* upon the three that we have killed."

"You may; I don't want their scalps nor their weapons," I replied.

By this time the enemy were drawing together again as they continued running from us, quartering off up the ridge that we had descended. We wasted a few more shots at them, and got into the

saddle and went after our pack-horse, and then back down the ridge and out to the dead. The old Kootenai had not been scalped. He lay flat upon his back; his lips were set in a peaceful, happy smile.

"His troubles are ended," I said.

"Yes. His shadow is on the way to wherever the Kootenai shadows go, and there, at last, the shadows of the father and the son will meet," Apsi replied.

"We can't leave him here, to be scalped and cut to pieces as soon as we are gone."

"No; we will pack the body in to the river and get the women to give it decent burial in a tree. But, first, let me attend to the ones that we have killed," said Apsi.

He proceeded to take, one after another, the scalps and the weapons of the three, Assiniboines or Yanktonnais, as we judged by their clothing and general appearance. We then put the beaver pelts upon our saddle-horses, lashed the body of poor old Back-in-Sight upon the pack-horse, and went on, followed by three or four parting shots from the enemy, watching our departure from far down the long ridge.

It was long after dark when we arrived at the river, opposite our post, and, firing a couple of shots, shouted for some one to come over with the skiff.

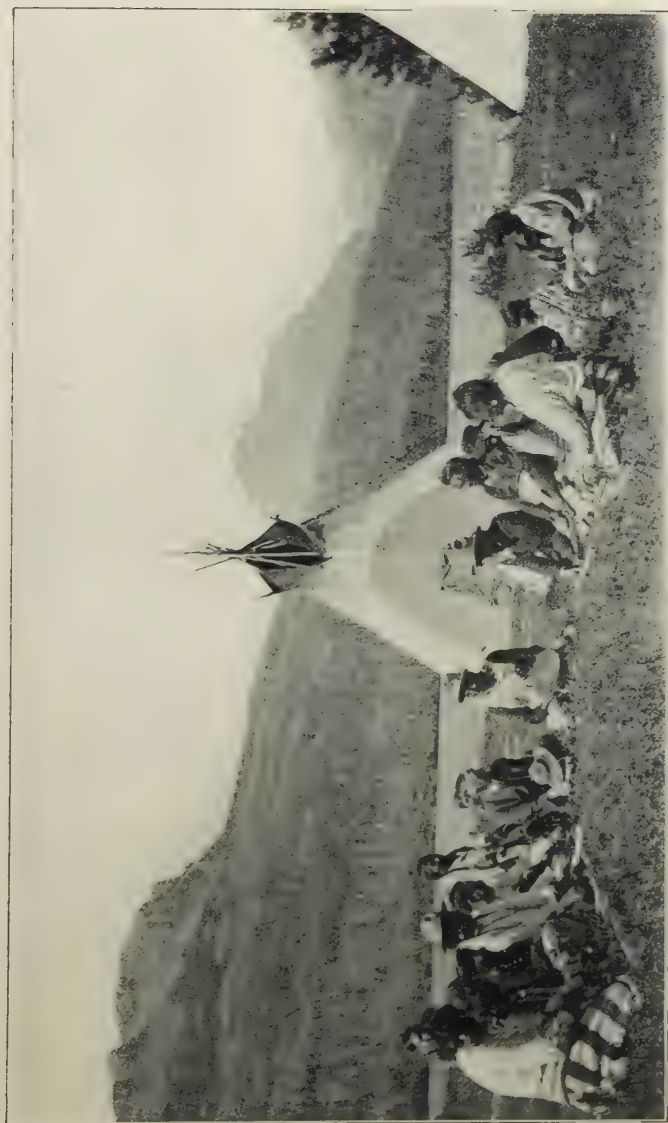
CHAPTER XIV

We kill some Newborn Legends

September 18

AN ever-increasing number of Park tourists are visiting our camp. The majority of them rush about in it with their cameras, take a lot of snapshots of the painted lodges, and pile into their cars and go on to photograph other scenes; a few, really interested, quietly gather around us and ask that our talk be interpreted. It is irksome to me to hear a tale told twice, a few sentences at a time, but I pass the request on to the old men, they nod assent, and young Crow Feathers, speaker of good English, is called upon to take the interpreter's seat. So it is that these visitors, having known only the story-book Indian, get a surprise, a real shock: they learn that he really is a human being, that he has traits of high character that will compare favorably with those of the white man, and fewer vices.

To-day we had a visitor who afforded us quite a lot of amusement. We were sitting out on the lake shore, smoking, and talking about an old friend, Charles Rivois, dead and gone, when a car from the big hotel drew up, and one of its



OUR CAMP AT THE FOOT OF LOWER TWO MEDICINE LAKE

Preparing to play the hide-the-bone game in front of the sacred Buffalo Stone lodge

Rising Wolf Mountain in the center background

passengers, a woman of fifty years or more, came and asked me if she could sit with us until the car returned from the Two Medicine chalets, above. I made suitable reply, and she motioned to the driver of the car to go on. She sat down beside me in our little circle, and straightway informed us that this was her third summer in Glacier Park, and that she was very much interested in the Indians. Crow Feathers interpreting that, the old men gravely nodded, murmured, "Ah!" — "Ahksi!" (Yes! — Good!) — and she exclaimed:

"They have such interesting legends. That one about Going-to-the-Sun Mountain, for instance; isn't it beautiful!"

"I have never heard it," I replied.

"Why, how strange! I was told that you know all about the Blackfeet. Well, then, I must tell you this legend," she said.

I reached for my notebook and pencil, and saw Crow Feathers wink at me. I asked her to tell it very slowly, so that I could write it.

Said Crow Feathers to the old men: "This white woman will tell us about Going-to-the-Sun; tell us why our ancient ones so named it."

"Ah!" — "Ah!" — "Ahksi!" they again exclaimed, their eyes gleaming merrily, their lips trembling with the repression of their smiles.

"It was very, very long ago," the woman began. "The Blackfeet were living at St. Mary's Lakes. The buffaloes became fewer and fewer there, and so, too, did the deer and elk and other game. But, before this, the warriors had somehow lost the way to make good strong bows, straight arrows, and sharp flint knives, and the women no longer knew how to dry meat so that it would keep, and they tanned skins so poorly that the clothing and moccasins that they made of them soon wore out. The tribe suffered from want of food and clothing —"

"Wait, please, let me set that down," I interrupted; and while I busied myself with my pencil, Crow Feathers hurriedly told the old men what she had said. Not one of them smiled, but they dared not look at the woman; one and all, they gravely watched Curly Bear, leisurely, nonchalantly, refilling the big black stone bowl of his pipe.

"The Great Spirit, looking down upon these poor Blackfeet, his chosen people, was terribly troubled when he saw how poor they had become, how unable to help themselves. He sent great herds of buffaloes back to the country around the lakes, and herds of elk and deer back to the timbered mountain slopes, but the warriors could kill only a few of the animals with the poor bows

and arrows that they made, and the women became more and more helpless to do their share of work, so he, the Great Spirit, tried another way to help them. . . .

“One day a strange man came into the camp of the Blackfeet, a man of fine appearance, and dressed in beautiful clothes. He would not say whence he had come; he asked to be allowed to live with the tribe for a time, and the chiefs granted his request. He at once began showing the people how to better their condition: he taught the men how to make powerful weapons; he taught the women how to make durable leather, fine baskets, how to dry foods so that they would not spoil. He had knowledge so great that the people soon realized that he was not a man of this earth, but still they could not learn from him whence he had come. They believed that he had been sent to them by the Great Spirit, for by his teachings they had become the most powerful, the richest, of all the tribes of the plains and mountains. . . .

“One day this wise man told the people that he must leave them. They could not prevail upon him to remain with them, in sorrow they saw him depart. They watched him ascend a very high mountain, and disappear in a great storm that was raging at its summit. The storm cleared,

and they saw that the snow it had left upon the east side of the great height was in shape the very likeness of the departed one's face. They knew then that he was a god; they knew whither he was going; and so named the mountain by which he had left the earth, Going-to-the-Sun Mountain. . . .

"There! That is all of it. Is it not a beautiful legend?" our visitor concluded.

"Yes, very beautiful," I agreed.

But Curly Bear was saying a few forceful words to Crow Feathers, and the latter turned to the narrator and said: "He, Curly Bear, says for me to tell you that your story is a big lie, that Apikuni, here, Mr. Schultz, he named that mountain, named it long ago when, a young man, he was hunting there with us."

The woman flinched as though she had been struck in the face. "Is that true?" she cried.

"Yes, I named the mountain — in 1884," I replied.

And at that our visitor all but wept. "Oh, how terribly I am disappointed!" she cried. "I thought it a beautiful legend. I wrote it carefully, just as it was told to me, intending to tell it in a talk that I am to give before our Travel Club, when I return home —"

"Who told it to you?" I asked.

"A man who has been touring the Park, a writer for a well-known Eastern publication."

"He has fine imagination, is doubtless a very successful writer," I said.

"He told me another Blackfeet legend, one that explains why a stream north of here was named Belly River. What can you tell me about it?"

"We will let Crow Feathers ask one of our old friends to tell you why it was so named," I replied.

"Tell this good, inquiring white woman that we thought every one knew why our ancient ones, our far-back fathers, named the river as they did," old White Grass quavered. "Just south of its big bend is a very large rock that has exactly the shape of the belly of an animal, of a buffalo, for instance, when it has been killed and turned upon its back, so as to be easily skinned. Our fathers named the river after that belly-shaped rock."

"Dear me! Oh, dear me! Well, just one more question: Why was the river flowing from this lake named Two Medicine Lodges River?"

White Dog was the one who answered that: "A half-day's ride below here is a big timbered bottom of the river where our tribe, the Pikuni, loved to camp. There our ancient ones got great quantities of meat, by decoying herds of buf-

faloes to a high cliff, and stampeding them from it down into a big corral that they had at the foot of it. One summer, they built there in the big bottom, His-Vision-Lodge, a great lodge that we have every summer built for Sun, there to pray to him and give him presents of great value. This summer in the long-ago, our fathers had no sooner built the lodge and concluded its four days' ceremonies than down from the north came one of our brother tribes, the Kaina, and there in the upper end of the bottom built their great lodge for Sun. So it was that, ever afterward, the river was called Two His-Vision-Lodges."

"The Hudson's Bay Company men, when they came west to the foot of the Rockies and became acquainted with the Blackfeet and their customs, named the great sacred lodges medicine lodges," I explained.

"I am terribly disappointed, but very grateful to you all for telling me the truth. That writer man! When I return to the hotel, I have to tear up a lot of manuscript that I was days in writing, and that is nothing but lies!" said the lady.

"This writer you have mentioned must have worked overtime while here, making up legends to fit the different topographical points that he visited," I said.

"He told me why Chief Mountain was so

named: In a long-ago time, when the Blackfeet tribes were starving and fast dying, a great war chief was hunting along the foot of the mountain and found and killed a white buffalo. He cut off the head of the animal and carried it to the very top of the mountain and gave it to the Great Spirit, praying him to turn the herds of game back into the country of his people and so save them from starvation. That prayer was granted. As the chief neared the camp of his people, great herds of buffaloes and antelopes were discovered, coming from the south, and the people went out and killed great numbers of them, and thereafter they always had plenty of food. And so they named the great mountain where their chief had prayed, Chief Mountain."

When Crow Feathers had interpreted that to our amused old men, Raven Chief said that it was well known that Chief Mountain had been so named by the anicent ones for its outstanding position: it appeared to be leading a long procession of mountains eastward out upon the plain. And then Crow Feathers said to our disillusioned visitor:

"Madam, this Great Spirit, or Manitou, that your writer friend told you about, we know nothing of him. We Pikuni, our brother tribes, the Kaina, or Bloods, the Blackfeet, yes, and the

Gros Ventres, too, all pray to Sun. He is our chief god. We pray, too, to Moon, his wife, Morning Star, their son, and to other gods. We have many gods. They are all of them very good gods, very powerful."

Said Heavy Eyes: "About that buffalo skull on top of Chief Mountain, it was carried up there by a young Kaina when I was a boy, by one who afterward became a chief of the tribe, and was given a powerful name, Old Sun. In those days, young men went off by themselves to the most lonely places they could find, there to fast and pray and obtain a vision. Many of them used a buffalo skull for a pillow, because the buffalo was a sacred animal, and therefore its shadow might help the faster to obtain a good vision, a vision of some ancient animal or bird that would become his lifelong helper. I knew a youth who used a human skull for a pillow. It was a fearsome thing to do, but it brought him a powerful vision: Morning Star, himself, came to him in his sleep, and told him that he would be his helper. Well, that youth became a great warrior, and lived to a very old age. He was no other than my uncle, Three Suns."

"Crow Feathers, what is your people's name for St. Mary's River?" our visitor asked.

"Ahkai'nuskwona: Many-Chiefs-Buried River,"

he replied, and told the others the question, and his reply to it.

"Yes, that is our name for it," said White Grass. "Undoubtedly the river had an earlier name, but it has long since been forgotten. In the long-ago, in a big bottom of the river, our fathers fought the Crows and defeated them, but in the battle lost many of their chiefs, whose bodies were afterward lashed upon scaffolds that their widows built in a cluster of trees, and so it was that the river got its newer name."

"Well, Crow Feathers, what is your people's name for the tribe of Indians that the whites call Gros Ventres? That, you know, is French for Big Bellies."

"Our name for them is Utse'na: Entrails People."

"Yes. Our long-ago fathers named them so, because they were very fond of the marrow entrails of the buffalo, roasted over the coals of their lodge fires. Then there is another tribe that our fathers named Isapwot'sina, Stuffed Entrails People, because fat-coated entrails, turned inside out and stuffed with fat meat, and cooked, were their main food," said White Grass.

When Crow Feathers had interpreted that, he added, "The Isapwot'sina are the Crows."

"Now abbreviated to Isapwo'," said I.

"This was once the country of the Crows. We took it from them, drove them to the south side of Elk River, or, as you whites call it, the Yellowstone River. I think that that river has many names. I know that the Kalispell and the Kootenai tribes call it Manifold River, after a rock formation in its valley, that is shaped like the manifold," said Crow Feathers.

"And what, may I ask, is the manifold?" our visitor queried.

"It is the second, or digesting stomach of ruminants," I explained.

Crow Feathers talked with the old men for a time, and then Curly Bear said to him: "Tell our white woman visitor this: Not satisfied with robbing us of our great country, the white men wiped out the names that we had given to its rivers, lakes, and mountains, and gave, in place of them, their own foolish names."

"As, for instance?"

"Well, there is a creek running into the Missouri, between Great Falls and Helena, that the whites call Wolf Creek. Its right name is Creek-Where-the-Wolf-Jumped-too," Crow Quiver replied.

"Such an odd name! Why was it so named?"

"Our fathers had a piskan, a buffalo corral, at the foot of one of the cliffs of the creek; they used

to decoy herds of buffaloes, stampede them over the cliff into the corral. Once, when they were doing that, a wolf that was following the herd paused at the edge of the cliff, stared at the people, the stampeders, who were closing in upon him, and, seeing that he could not pass through the close line of them, he turned and sprang from the cliff, and crashed upon the rocks below and died."

"A creek flowing into the Musselshell River, that the whites have named South Willow Creek, was the Creek-Where-the-Foxes-Gambled of the Blackfeet tribes," said I.

"How very interesting!"

"And our River-in-Which-the-Shield-Floated-off, they named the Madison River," said Crow Feathers.

"Yes; so named by Lewis and Clark, after President Madison. And very properly named," said the lady.

"Our fathers gave it its name, how many hundreds of years before Lewis and Clark were born!" Crow Feathers replied.

"Well, I see the stage returning. Thank you all so much for my pleasant morning here. Good-bye!" said the visitor, and hurried out to the road and was gone.

"It should still be River-Where-the-Shield-Floated-off!" said Crow Feathers.

CHAPTER XV

The Story of the Sacred East-Plant

September 19

YESTERDAY we were all of us sober-faced and quiet when we gathered around the evening fire in Curly Bear's lodge. He filled his big pipe with the fragrant mixture of tobacco and *l'herbe*, but, instead of passing it to another to light, as was customary, lit it himself and, after blowing a few whiffs of the smoke to the sky, and down to the ground, he pointed the stem aloft and prayed: "O Sun! We smoke to you, pity us! With this night, our time of happy together-camping ends. To-morrow we separate; we go our different ways. We are old! Very old! Pity us, Sun! Fully pity us! Help us all to survive the coming winter; let us see the green grass of another summer!"

"Yes! Pity us, Sun! Help us! Give us full and happy life. Allow us to see, at least, the green grass of another summer!" cried old White Grass, after he had smoked and passed the pipe; and at that, every member of our little circle cried, "Yes! Full life! Give us full life, O Sun!"

Curly Bear handed me a beautiful porcupine-quill embroidered buffalo-leather tobacco pouch,

saying: "Take it. I give it to you. Its contents are very sacred: some of the East-Plant, and a piece of ancient fire-rock."

The fire-rock was, of course, a piece of flint. The East-Plant (nahwat'osin) was the narcotic plant which the Blackfeet tribes cultivated and used for smoking before they obtained tobacco from the white traders. It was so named, according to an ancient tradition, because the tribes first got it from a people who lived to the east of their country, then the region of the Great Slave Lake. The Pikuni tribe of the Confederacy had not cultivated it in my time, but I had once smoked some of the plant, given me by Earth Woman, Joseph Kipp's mother, and I remembered that I had found it not to my liking.

Curly Bear now surprised me by remarking: "I have also some of the seed of the East-Plant. Not so very long ago, I helped in a spring planting of it. I am a member of the Planters' Society of the North Blackfeet."

"I did not know that any of our relative tribes still plant it," I said.

"The Blackfeet, and our other relatives, the Bloods, have never missed a single summer planting of the sacred seed!" he exclaimed. "They have not been harassed, have not suffered under the care of the Red Coats, as we have been made

to suffer under this government of the Big Knives. White men are not allowed to overrun their reservations; they live in peace and quiet and plenty, as we, too, might have done had we accepted the offer of the Red Coats, to live upon the lands that they proposed to set aside for us, upon the upper reaches of Belly River."

"Let us have no talk about our big mistake," said White Dog.

"You are right; it is too sad to talk about. I will just tell Apikuni and Lone Wolf, here, how I became a member of the Planters' Society.

"Now, then, listen: Several winters back, a messenger came to me from old Blackfeet friends: I was invited to become a member of their Planters' Society, and join them in the planting of the sacred seed in the coming New Leaves moon. I was glad that they remembered me, those friends with whom I had hunted, with whom I had more than once fought the enemy, away back in the time of our youth upon the buffalo plains. And at this time I was not well; my strength was going from me. I thought that, by becoming a member of the society and taking part in its sacred ceremonies, I might be made well. I sent the messenger back with many presents for my friends, and with word to them that I would be with them in time for the great ceremony.

“With seven head of saddle- and pack-horses, my woman and I arrived in the camp of our friends, on Bow River, where Arrow Wood Creek joins it. The whole tribe of Blackfeet were there, camping as nearly as was possible in the way they camped before the coming of the white man. Not a wagon was to be seen. There were plenty of old-time saddles and travois for the horses, and many small travois had been made, to be loaded with the ceremonial things of the Planters’ Society, and drawn by dogs, as had been the custom in the long-ago, before our fathers obtained horses.

“On the day following our arrival in the camp, four men who had good war records from the time when we fought our many enemy tribes were selected to go up the river to the place where the sacred seed was to be planted, and there cut poles for a ceremonial lodge. On the next day, we all moved up the river and camped at some distance below the selected place. Early the next morning, we all dressed in our old-time clothes, men in their war clothes, women and girls in gowns of deer leather, bighorn and antelope leather, and even buffalo leather; for, mind you, the Blackfeet have never parted with their clothing and many ceremonial things of the long-ago.

“I should explain here that the Planters’ So-

ciety is and always has been under the protection of the successive owners of the Beaver, or, as it is also called, the Water ceremony. And rightly, too, for upon water, in the way of rain, depends the growth of the sacred East-Plants.

“Now, on this morning, when we were all dressed in our old-time clothes, we moved camp again, and pitched our lodges along the river-bank about two hundred steps from the place where the new-cut poles and willows were piled. When that was done, the old man and woman who had the Beaver ceremonial things put them all upon their dog-drawn travois, and led the way to the poles, close followed by the men of the Planters’ Society — I with them — and then the great crowd of the people. Upon our way to the poles, we all stopped four times, the sacred number, one for each world direction, and at each stop sang one of the songs of the East-Plant. We then arrived at the cut poles and willows, and with them soon made a large lodge. When it was completed, the men of the Planters’ Society went into the scattering timber and brush, and marked off thirteen places, each about five steps square, where the sacred seed was to be planted, and to these the boys and girls of the tribe brought dry sticks and brush with which to burn the patches. When all the patches were piled with the dry ma-

terial, we gathered around the first one of them, old Comes-in-the-Morning and his woman, owners of the Beaver ceremony, with all the different animal and bird skins belonging to it, and the members of the Planters' Society, and closely surrounding us the great crowd of the people.

"Comes-in-the-Morning began opening his sacred bundles, passing to us the various animal and bird skins, and, as we reverently held them up and began singing the songs of the Planters, he set fire to the pile of brush, not with a match, but with an ancient bow fire-instrument, for it was feared that the use of a match for the sacred purpose, a white men's fire-instrument, might be offensive to the gods and bring to naught the planters' work. And so we went from one patch to another, singing our songs during the burning of them, until all were burned. We then, we Planters, went to our big poles and brush lodge, the outside of which was now covered with lodge skins, as a protection from the rain which it was expected Comes-in-the-Morning would be able to bring.

"The ground was very dry; we had to have rain to moisten it for the planting of the East-Plant seeds, and Comes-in-the-Morning, owner of the Beaver-Water sacred ceremony, and himself a member of the Planters' Society, was the

only one of the whole tribe who possibly had the power to bring it to the parched land, and our more than parched, newly burned-over planting places. Now, when we were all seated in the big lodge, he said to us: 'Sun is going down to his lodge through a clear sky; there is nowhere a cloud in sight. It is going to be very difficult to bring the rain, but you must not falter, you must all help me, keep helping me, throughout the night, if necessary.' One and all of us, we cried out that we would be with him to the very end.

"In the center of this big lodge was a row of small trees set into the ground. A fire was built in front of the row, and the old man sat down before it, with his sacks of Beaver ceremony things, including his Beaver Pipe. He opened the sacks and took from them and distributed to us all the sacred animal and bird skins that they contained, and himself kept the skin of the robin, for this bird is the chief helper of the Planters. You may have noticed that, more than any other bird, the robin is the most tireless, successful hunter and seizer of the worms and the crawling and the flying insects that feed upon and kill young and tender growing plants. With the taking of this skin, the old man put aside his name for the time being, and told us that we must call him Robin,

until we had planted the sacred seed and ended the great ceremony.

“Presently, Robin called me to take a few live coals from the fire with his tongs, and lay them close to his sitting place, and then take off all of my clothing, except breechclout and moccasins. I did as he directed, and he then put some sweet grass upon the coals, purified himself in the scented smoke that arose, and, turning, painted me with yellow paint and red, prayed for me, and finally cried out that I, Curly Bear, was now a member of the Planters’ Society.

“Night had now come. The four members of the society who had cut the poles and brush for making the big lodge, passed food to us all, and we ate it. Robin then filled his big pipe and passed it, and, as it went the round of our circle, we prayed Sun and all the gods and the water animals to give us success in all that we were to do. When four pipefuls had been smoked, Robin took four otter skins from a sack, ordered that each one be tied to the end of a long pole, and then had the poles thrust up in a row, through the smoke-hole of the lodge. There they hung above it, skins of the most cunning of all of the water animals, swaying in the light night wind, our sign to the gods that we wanted water — rain for our planting grounds.

"We went on smoking to the gods, praying to them, singing the sacred Beaver ceremony songs, and frequently Robin sent one of us out to see what the weather was: it was as before, a cloudless sky, a light wind coming from the south. The night wore on, and when the Seven Persons passed their middle-of-the-night position, and there was still no sign of rain, Robin became very anxious. He sang over and over his most powerful Beaver ceremony song, in which were the words, 'Oh, my Sun-powered animal, I want rain.' That seemed to do some good, for a weather man reported that clouds were gathering in the south. At that, Robin drew a few coals from the fire, put sweet grass upon them, and cried out to us to watch the smoke from it. We saw the smoke rise in a slender column to the height of four or five hands, and then spread out like the sky above. That was a good sign; it indicated rain; we took courage, and, with Robin, fiercely sang his Beaver songs. And before long, another questioner of the weather went out, and, returning, cried that the clouds had already covered more than half of the sky. Good news that was! Good news! and Robin shouted to us, 'Now for our greatest effort! You, Curly Bear, Old Person, Lame Bull, Lone Bear, come here to me!'

"He handed a skin to each of us, two of the

otter and two of the mink, both powerful water animals, and told us to dance upon the north side of the fire. We did so, he and all the others singing the Dance Song of the Beaver ceremony. He then had us go to the east side of the fire and dance, and finally to the south side of it, where we danced faster and faster, harder and harder; and, when we were almost at the end of our strength, lo! Thunder Bird gave his terrible cry right above us, and came the rain. Hard wind and rain and hail beat upon the lodge skins, and our hearts were glad. We rested and feasted and smoked and talked, praising the gods. The rain ceased with the dawn; Sun came up in a clear sky. The people hurried to us from their lodges, and praised us for bringing the needed rain. How happy we were!

“Men, women, and children again were dressed in their ceremonial clothes, and, when Sun was well up in the blue, we started to the burned planting places, Robin leading with his sack of seeds of the East-Plant, we, the Planters, close following, and after us the great crowd of people. We sang the songs of the Beaver ceremony as we approached the first patch; we came to it, and with sharp-pointed sticks crossed it slowly, at each step making holes in the moist black ground with our sticks, and dropping into them the seeds

which Robin had distributed among us. Then, when we had finished planting the patch, four children — the sacred number — were called to run over the rows of the plantings, to press the ground firmly down upon the seeds. They were instructed to be very careful to run straight along the rows, as, if they succeeded in doing so, it was a sign that they would live to great age. Their mothers and fathers watched them very anxiously while they did this, and constantly reminded them that they must run straight over the rows. That first patch planted and the rows run over by the children, we went on and in like manner planted the next one, and the next; and so on until all thirteen were planted. Then Robin announced that the work was completed, and that, as we returned to camp, we would sing the Beaver songs, and not once look back, because the shadows of the sacred plants would already be there at the patches, encouraging the seeds to sprout, and it was dangerous for people to look at them. We all followed this instruction, none looked back, and, as soon as we arrived in camp, we hurried to take down our lodges, saddled and packed our horses, and moved back down the river to the mouth of Arrow Wood Creek. From there, a couple of days later, my woman and I took the trail for home.

“As always had been done, this the Planters did afterward: twenty-five days after we had planted the seed, one of our number was sent upon a swift horse to the planting places, and he carried a small pouch of the sacred seed which was tied to the end of a willow stick. Following his instructions, he rode straight to our old campground close to the plantings, and there stuck the end of the stick into the ground, and, without once looking toward the patches, hurried back to camp. The stick, with its attached pouch of seeds, was our prayer offering to the shadows of the East-Plant, our request that they give our plantings strong, full growth. At that time they were there, dressed all of them in buffalo-calf robes, watching the growth of their seed children, and it was dangerous for any human person to look at them. During the time that this rider was away upon his sacred errand, all the other members of the Planters’ Society were gathered in Comes-in-the-Morning’s lodge, helping him with his Beaver ceremony, and praying for a large harvest of the East-Plant. Twenty-five days after this, the same messenger was again sent to the plantings, this time to look at them and report upon their growth, for now, fifty days after we had put the seed into the ground, the shadows of the sacred plants had finished their work and

gone away. Then, in the moon of Falling Leaves, the people again moved up the river and camped, and harvested the sacred plants. They had attained full growth and were many. Later on, a messenger brought me my share of the plants. Each one had twelve leaves upon its stem, and a seed pod, and at its roots a bulb. It is the bulb, not the leaves, that we cut fine and smoke. There, I have told you all about the sacred East-Plant."

"One thing about it I cannot understand," I said. "Four being the sacred number, why thirteen planting places, and twenty-five-day periods of the messenger's return to the plantings? If they were twelve plantings, and twenty-four-day periods of the messenger going back there, that would be three times, and eight times the sacred number, which would seem to be right."

"It is not for me to explain that. All I know is that we do in this just as our fathers have done from the far-back time when they obtained the sacred plant and its seeds. It may be that the East People from whom they got the plant instructed them that they must seed thirteen patches of ground, and send a messenger back to them on the twenty-fifth and the fiftieth day after the planting. Those may have been the sacred numbers of the East People."

"As you have some East-Plant seeds, why can we not all gather here again, next New Grass moon, and plant it? — have the complete planting ceremony?" I asked.

At that, Curly Bear laughed, and my other old friends grimly smiled.

"I am but a member of the Planters' Society; only the head of it, Comes-in-the-Morning, there in the North, can initiate new members," he replied.

"But can we not get him, and the other North members of the Society, to come down here next New Grass moon, and with complete ceremony make thirteen plantings of the seed?"

"Ha! Well said! That is worth trying!" he exclaimed, and all of our little circle clapped hands together in approval.

"We will send those North Planters presents — horses, blankets; they then cannot refuse to come," said White Grass.

"And we need the East-Plant so badly. With only offerings of white men's tobacco smoke to them, it is no wonder that the gods often fail to heed our prayers," said another.

"Haiya! Our very last night together, and already it is time for us to sleep!" Raven Chief exclaimed.

"You mean that it is our last night together

until we come, next summer, again to camp here upon this sacred river," said Heavy Eyes.

"Yes, that is what I meant. We must all of us pray, pray hard for it."

"Kyi! Now we must sleep," said Curly Bear, and silently, and very reluctantly, we filed out of the lodge and went our different ways.

This morning, while the women were taking down the lodges and packing the horses, my son and I had a last smoke with our old friends, and few were our words as the pipe went from hand to hand the round of the circle. At last it was smoked out, and slowly and with painstaking care Curly Bear knocked the ashes from it, put it in its pouch, and exclaimed: "Kyi! It is finished, this our happy time together! Now, we go!"

And at that we all got up, and one by one the old men embraced my son and me, and silently and with bowed heads went to their saddled horses, and their women came and as silently, and some with tears, shook hands with us and turned away. Then, as the little caravan of them started down the valley, Curly Bear turned and came back to us, and said: "You have the East-Plant that I gave you. Be sure to smoke it now and then in the coming winter, and pray the gods to keep us in health and strength, so that we may

at least once more camp together here upon this river."

"Yes! We will do that!" my son replied. And as the old man gave his eager horse its head, we heard the rumble of the automobile truck coming to take us and our impedimenta to the studio and the railway station. And as we watched it whiz up past the slow procession of our departing friends, my son exclaimed: "There's contrast, the travois and the automobile!"

"And soon there will be no travois, except here and there one under glass in the museums!"

"And soon, no more Pikuni! The ruthless white men and their civilization, what haven't they done to these, our people!"

"That," said I, "is the blackest page of American history."

THE END

